The Use and Intent of PROPHECY, in the several Ages of the World.

IN SIX

## DISCOURSES,

Delivered at the

## TEMPLE CHURCH

In APRIL and MAY, 1724.

Published at the Desire of the MASTERS of the BENCH of the Two Honourable Societies.

To which are added,

# Four DISSERTATIONS, and an APPENDIX.

I. The Authority of the Second Epifle of St. PETER.

II. The Sense of the Ancients, before CHRIST, upon the Circumstances and Consequences of the FALL.

An APPENDIX to the Second Differtation, being a farther Enquiry into the Mosaick Account of the FALL.

III. The Bleffing of JUDAH, Gen. xlix.

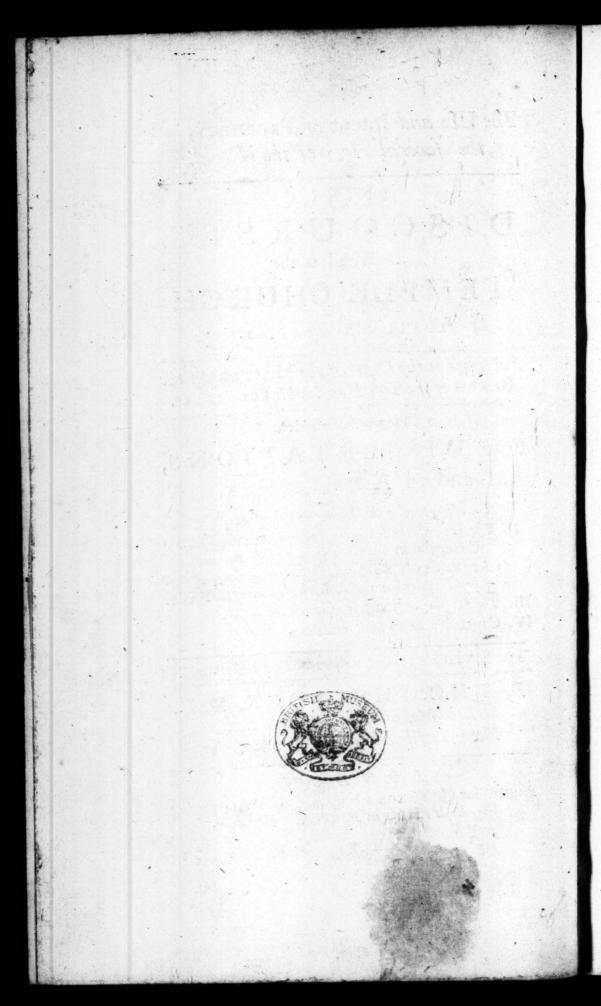
IV. CHRIST'S Entry into Jerusalem.

The SIXTH EDITION, Corrected and Enlarged.

By THO. SHERLOCK, D. D. Late Master of the TEMPLE,
Now Lord Bishop of LONDON.

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To the Worshipful the

## MASTERS of the Bench

Of the Two HONOURABLE

# Societies of the Temple,

THESE

# DISCOURSES

(Published at their Desire)

Are INSCRIBED, by

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THO. SHERLOCK.

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### 2 PETER i. 19.

We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your Hearts.



HERE being evidently a Comparison in the Text between the Word of Prophecy, and something before mentioned or intended, 'tis neces-

fary to look back to fee how the Relation stands, and what the Thing is to which the

Word of Prophecy is compar'd and preferr'd. At the 16th Verse the Apostle says, We have not followed cunningly devised Fables when we made known unto you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And after thus disclaiming all Art and Deceit, in fetting forth the Promises and Expectations of the Gospel, he proceeds to declare upon what Evidence and Authority he had rais'd fuch Expectations in them: But (we) were Eye-witnesses of his Majesty, for he received from God the Father Honour and Glory, when there came fuch a Voice to him from the excellent Glory; This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this Voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with him in the Holy Mount. Immediately follow the Words of the Text, We have also a more fure Word of Prophecy.

You see upon what Foundation their Inference stands, who affert, That the Evidence which Christians have from Prophecy for the Certainty of their Hopes and Expectations, compar'd with the Evidence they have from the Preaching of the Apostles, who were Eye-witnesses and Ear-witnesses of what they report concerning the Majesty of Christ, is the greater and surer Evidence; or, in the

Words

Words of a late Author, That " \* Prophecy " is a stronger Argument than a Miracle, "which depends upon external Evidence " and Testimony." This Author has taken great Pains to shew, that the Argument from Prophecy for the Truths of Christianity, as managed and applied by the Writers of the New Testament, is absurd and ridiculous; and that we may not flatter ourselves with Hopes of Affistance from other Arguments, he gives us this Text of St. Peter, to flew, by the Authority of our own Scriptures, that Prophecy, as bad an Argument as it is, is nevertheless the very best that our Cause affords: But his Views be to himfelf; what Truth there is in his Exposition and Application of this Part of Scripture, we shall foon fee.

Interpreters differ very much in expounding this Passage; but all, as far as I see, agree in rejecting this Sense which gives a Superiority to the Evidence of Prophecy above all other Evidence, by which the Truth of the Gospel is confirmed; and indeed the Text expounded to this Meaning, contradicts not only the general Sense of Mankind upon this

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<sup>\*</sup> A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion, printed 1724. p. 27.

Subject, but will be found likewise inconfiftent with itself, and many other Places of Scripture. For first, let any Man consider, and fay upon what Proof and Evidence the Authority of Prophecy itself depends: Can any Prophet give greater Proof of his Divine Mission, than the Power of working Miracles? And if this be the last, and the greatest Proof he can give of his being sent by God, can the Evidence of Prophecy ever rise higher than the Evidence of Miracles, upon which it ultimately depends for all its Authority? When Gideon was called to the Deliverance of Ifrael, the Angel of the Lord came and faid unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty Man of Valour ;- go in this thy Might, and thou shalt save Israel from the Hand of the Midianites; have not I sent thee? Here now was a Prophecy delivered by the Angel of the Lord to encourage his Undertaking. What fays Gideon to this? He defires a Sign; If now I have found Favour in thy Sight, then shew me a Sign that thou talkest with me. A Sign is given him, a miraculous Sign; he is fatisfied, and undertakes the Work appointed; to which he is again encouraged by two Miracles wrought at his Request, Judges vii. What think you now? The

The Prophecy delivered by the Angel was as much a Prophecy before, as it was after Miracles wrought in Confirmation of it: But was the Word of Prophecy more fure before the Miracles than after? If fo, why was a Sign defired? and, when defired, why was it granted? Does God work Miracles to humour Men in their Folly? or is it to confirm their Faith? If it be to confirm their Faith, then our Faith in the Prophets depends upon the Authority of Miracles; and fince the Stream can never rife above the Spring-Head, the Evidence of Prophecy cannot be greater than the Evidence of Miracles. But let us take an higher Instance; Moses was the first, . and the greatest Prophet of the Law, to whom God spoke Face to Face: He was called by God to deliver the Children of Ifrael out of Egypt, and commissioned to assure them of God's immediate Protection. This I suppose was sufficient to make him a Prophet to Ifrael: But what fays Mofes? Bebold they will not believe me, nor bearken to my Voice; or they will fay, The Lord bath not appeared Was this a foolish Complaint in unto thee. Moses? If it was, how came God to listen to it, and to furnish him with an Answer above all Exception, by giving him immediately

diately a Power to work Miracles in Confir-- mation of his Prophecy? Does not this Method of God's Proceeding plainly shew, that Miracles are the Prophet's greatest Authority and Confirmation? What is that superior Evidence of Prophecy, then, which is faid fo much to exceed the Evidence of Miracles? But to go on: The Comparison in the Text, with respect to St. Peter himself, is between the Word of Prophecy, and the immediate Word of God: And according to this Exposition of the Text, St. Peter, who declares that he heard the Voice of God himself in the Mount, is made in his Own Person to say; (for the Words are, WE bave a more sure Word of Prophecy) That the dark Prophecies of the Old Testament were a surer and more certain Evidence, than this immediate Voice of God which he heard with his own Ears. Now what is Prophecy, that it should be more furely and certainly to be depended on than the immediate Voice of God? Is it possible to think that St. Peter, or any Man in his Wits, could make fuch a Comparifon?

But further; let us consider what Account St. Peter himself gives of this Word of Prophecy; which, we are told, is beyond Comparison

parison the best and the surest Evidence we have for our Faith: He compares it to a Light shining in a dark Place; and distinguishes it from Day-light, and that Brightness which is usher'd in by the Day-Star. This Word of Prophecy then is here compar'd by St. Peter to the glimmering Light of a Candle seen at a Distance in a dark Night; which tho' it gives some Direction, yet is nothing, compared to clear Day-light. Is not this now a choice Account of the Evidence of the Gospel; nay, of the very best Evidence which we have of the Gospel? Are we still surrounded on all Sides with Darkness, affisted by one only distant glimmering Light? Was it thus that Christ came to be a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the Glory of Israel? St. Peter in his first Epistle tells all Christians, that they are called out of Darkness into God's marvellous Light; how comes he then in this fecond Epistle to tell them, that they are still in Darkness, and have nothing but a Light glimmering in the Darkness to direct them? Can the same Writer possibly be supposed to give fuch different Accounts of our Gospel-State? Ask St. Paul, what State Christians are in, he will tell you, That the Light of the glorious Gospel B 4

Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, bas shown unto them, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Ask the Evangelists, they will tell you, The Dayspring from on high bath visited us, to give Light to them that fit in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death. Ask any, or all of the Apostles, they will tell you their Commission is, To open the Eyes of the People, and to turn them from Darkness to Light; Acts xxvi. 16. agreeable to what our Lord told his Disciples, Ye are the Light of the World, Matth. v. 14. How different is this Account from that which St. Peter is supposed to give of the best Light we have under the Gospel, in contradiction to himself, and almost every Writer of the New Testament!

But let us go one Step further, and we shall find, that St. Peter in the Text is so far from speaking of the Word of Prophecy, as of the best Light or Evidence to be had for the Point in question, whatever it was, that he manifestly speaks of it as not the best, but as a Light to be attended to only until a better comes: Hear his Words; We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your Hearts.

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This Light, you see, is to be attended to only till the Day-light comes; so far is it from being itself the best Light, that it must give way to a better. What the true Import and Meaning of this is, we shall see hereaster. But surely St. Peter would not have limited any Time for their attending to the Word of Prophecy, had he been considering it as the best Support of Christian Faith; for in that Sense it ought ever to be attended to, and to be the constant Employment of a Christian's Meditation, so long as Life and Thought remain with him.

These Reasons, I suppose, prevailed with Interpreters to quit the apparent Sense of this Text, which seems to prefer the Authority of Prophecy to the Authority of all other Evidence, whereby the Doctrine of the Gospel is confirmed; and to seek for some other, more conformable to Truth and Reason. But however they are agreed in rejecting this Sense, they are far from being agreed in establishing any other.

The Greek Expositors suppose the Sense here to be, the Prophecy is now to Christians, a more sure and convincing Evidence than ever it was, having been verified and established by the Events. This Interpreta-

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tion preserves the Force of the Comparison; but then it places the Comparison where St. Peter has not placed it. He manifestly compares the Evidence of Prophecy to the Evidence arising from the Glorification of Christ, attested by those who delivered what they had heard and seen with their own Eyes and Ears: But of the Evidence and Weight of Prophecy before and after the Completion he says nothing. Grotius thought this Sense the most convenient, and has adopted it in his Commentary on the Place.

Others \* suppose that the Comparative is used in this Text, in the Sense of the Positive, to express the great Certainty of the Evidence mentioned. According to them, the Meaning is, "That we have a very sure "Evidence in the Words of Prophecy:"This Exposition introduces a new Use of Language into the Text, for which having no sufficient Authority to produce, it can claim no Authority itself. The Instances given to support this Construction, as far as I have seen, are not pertinently alledged.

Others, preserving the natural Signification of the Words, and therefore admitting the Comparison, will not however allow the

<sup>\*</sup>Erasmus, Junius and Tremellius.

Comparison to be absolute, but only relative; relative to the Opinions and Prejudices of the Jews, to whom this Epistle was directed. According to this Interpretation, the Apostle does not affert, That Prophecy is in itself a better Argument than the Evangelical Evidence, but only that it is better to fews; who being educated in an Esteem and Reverence for the Prophets from their Childhood, and being but new and tender Converts to the Gospel, had a much greater Regard to the Authority of their own Prophets, than to the Testimony of the Apostles. But as to this Exposition; in the first Place, there is nothing in the Text to countenance it: In the next place; had this been St. Peter's Meaning, he never would have spoken in the first Person, and joined himself in the same Opinion with his Country-men: WE have, fays he, a more fure Word of Prophecy - Now whatever the Yews thought, St. Peter could not think that the ancient obscure Prophecies, and which he compares immediately to a Light shining in a dark Place, were a stronger Evidence than the Miracles of Jesus, and the Attestation of God himself to the Truth of his Mission. This therefore could not be St. Peter's Meaning.

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These are the most considerable Expositions, which have been given of this Passage. 'Tis evident that all Interpreters have been fensible of the Absurdity of setting up Prophecy as a superior Evidence to all other Gospel Evidence; and that to avoid this Difficulty, they have been driven to feek out other Meanings. And yet, without all Question, the Words of the Text, according to their most natural Sense, do import, that the Evidence of Prophecy is a furer Evidence than that before mentioned; which was the Apostle's own Testimony of the Glory of Christ, which he had seen with his Eyes; and of the Voice of God declaring Christ to be his beloved Son; of which the Apofile was an Ear-witness in the Mount. But as natural as this Sense is, yet they who conclude from hence, that Prophecy is a better Evidence of the Mission of Christ, and the Truth of the Gospel, than any other Evidence, draw a Conclusion which the Text will not justify. For look back and see what is the Thing to be proved by this more fure. Word of Prophecy; Is it the Mission of Christ? St. Peter says nothing of it. Is it the Truth of the Gospel? nothing less. The Apostle tells us, in the 16th Verse, That God declared

declared Christ by a Voice from the excellent Glory, to be his beloved Son: But this is not the Thing he would prove, for he brings this Declaration to prove fomething else: And this Declaration is confidered as one of the Proofs to which he compares the Word of Prophecy.

To clear this Matter, let us consider what it is that St. Peter intended to prove; for without knowing this, 'tis impossible to judge of the Comparison in the Text; for in some Cases Prophecy is no Proof, in others it may be our very best Evidence, notwithstanding that it is a glimmering Light, faintly thining through the Dark.

The fecond Epistle of St. Peter was written to support and maintain the Hopes and Expectations which he had raised in his first; as will be evident upon a Comparison of the two together. To the first Epistle, therefore, we must go, to see the Foundation and Rife of the Matter to which this con-

troverted Text in the second relates.

The Christians, to whom the first Epistle was directed, were in a State of severe Trial and Persecution; They were for a Season in Heaviness, through manifold Temptations, i. 6. They were spoken against as evil Doers, ii. 12. - iii. 16.

iii. 16. iv. 4. They suffered for Righteousness fake, iii. 14. They were reproached for the Name of Christ, iv. 14. and were made Partakers of his Sufferings, ver. 13. This being the Case, the Apostle administers suitable Advice to them: He calls upon them to arm themselves with the same Mind which was in Christ, who suffered for us in the Flesh, iv. 1. he bids them account it their Happiness that uhey were reproached for the Name of Christ, iv. 14. and rejoice that they were Partakers of his Sufferings, ver. 13. He reminds them that his fiery Trial was no strange or furprizing Event; but what had been foretold, and what they had Reason to expect, iv. 12. And that the Same Afflictions were accomplished in their Brethren in the World, v. o. That the Time was come (foretold before) That Judgment must begin at the House of God, iv. 17.

Together with these Admonitions he gives them Assurance of a certain Deliverance near at Hand. He tells them they were kept by the Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation, ready to be revealed, i. 5. That their Trial would yield Honour and Glory at the Appearing of Jesus Christ, ver. 7. He bids them have perfect Hope and Considence in

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the Grace, or Deliverance, to be brought at the Revelation of Christ Jesus, ver. 13. in the Day of Visitation, ii. 12. For the Certainty of this Deliverance, and Salvation now ready (or prepared) to be revealed, and of the Share they should have in it, he appeals to the ancient Prophets, and the Spirit of Christ in them, testifying before-hand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory which should follow, i. 11. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things now reported unto you, ver. 12. The first Scene, the Sufferings of Christ, being over, iv. 1. his Glory was ready to be revealed, which would bring them exceeding Joy, iv. 13. and be to the Destruction of their Persecutors, the Ungodly, and the Sinners, ver. 18.

All these Hopes were sounded in this, That Christ himself had already received Glory and Power, and would return in his Glory and Power to save true Believers. Our Trust in God is by St. Peter built upon this, that God raised him (Christ) from the Dead, and gave him Glory, 1 Pet. i. 21. And it is at the Revelation of this Glory, that Christians are taught to expect exceeding Joy, iv. 13. You see now how much Weight is laid by St. Peter in his first Epistle upon the Expec-

Expectation of Christ's Coming in the Power

and Glory of God.

It is very probable that the diffreffed Christians conceived at first great Hopes from these Assurances given them by an Apostle of Christ, and expected (as it is natural for Men in Affliction to do) that every Day would bring their Deliverance with it. But when one Year after another paffed, and no Deliverance came, when the Scoffers began to ridicule their Hopes, and asked in Mockery, Where is the Promise of his Coming? 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. their Hearts grew fick; and their Hopes deferred, instead of being any Comfort or Support to them, became an Addition of Grief, and filled them with Fears and Suspicions, lest they had believed in vain. Many of them, worn out with Diftress and Persecution, began to give way, and willingly listened to the corrupt Teachers, who instructed them to keep fair with the World, and to keep their Faith to themfelves; by means of which wicked Doctrine they were led away, and fell from their Stedfastness, 2 Ep. chap. iii. ver. 17. and to avoid fuffering, denied the Lord that bought them, ch. iii. ver. 1.

In this State of Things, and at the Diftance of five or fix Years from the writing of the first Epistle, the Apostle sends his second Letter: and it answers in every Point to this Account. In the first Chapter the Apostle endeavours to re-establish and confirm the Hopes of Believers; but he does it with the Air of one who had been reproached for his Doctrine; We have not, fays he, followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known to you the Power and Coming of the Lord Jesus, chap. i. ver. 16. You see here again the true Point upon which St. Peter placed the Hopes and Expectations of true Believers. In the fecond Chapter he takes notice of the false Teachers who brought in damnable Heresies, denying the Lord that bought them; these he threatens with swift Destruction, ver. 1. and tells them, That, however they might conceive of the Promise of Christ's speedy Coming, yet they would affuredly find, that their own Judgment did not linger, nor their own Damnation slumber, ver. 3. that it would have been better for them not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the boly Commandment delivered to them, ver. 21. In the third and last Chapter he considers the Scoffers, and their irreligious Infult, Where

Where is the Promise of his Coming? ver. 4. He enters into their Argument, and shews them, from what had already happened in the World, how perversely they reasoned about future Things. He concludes the whole with proper Cautions to Christians, when they consider and endeavour to understand the Times and Seasons of God's Judgments; and guards not only his own, but St. Paul's Doctrine upon this Article, the Coming of Christ, (so much was his Mind bent to clear this one Point) against the perverse Use of the Unlearned and Unstable, ver. 15, 16.

You see now what is the main, the only great Point, in this second Epistle; it is the Coming of Christ in Power and Glory, to deliver the Faithful, and to take Vengeance of the Ungodly and Unbelievers, as foretold by the Prophets under both Testaments. this Coming of Christ was future, and at a Distance; and depended entirely (as to any Knowledge that could be had of it) upon the Authority of Propbecy: For which Reason St. Peter refers, in his first Epistle, to the antient Prophets, and to the inspired Preachers of the Gospel, to justify the Hopes he raised; of which Salvation, or Deliverance, fays he, the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophefied of the Grace that should

come unto you, chap. i. 10. which Things are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, ver. 12. And for the same Reason in this second Epistle he refers again to Prophecy, as being of all others (and in Things of Futurity it needs

must be) the most sure Evidence.

This Account of St. Peter's Epistles is indeed not mine, but his own: For he tells us expressly, that his Intention in both his Epistles was, to make them to whom they were fent, mindful of the Words which were spoken before of the boly Prophets; he adds, and of the Commandments of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour: 2 Ep. iii. 1, 2. That this latter Part relates to the same Subject as the former, will appear by comparing it with the Passage just before quoted, 1 Ep. i. 12. where St Peter confiders the Apostles, as Prophets, or Expounders of the Prophets, under the Affistance of the Holy Ghost, preaching those very Things which the antient Prophets had testified beforehand.

Take this Key along with you, and fee how it will open this so much perplexed Passage of Scripture now under Confideration: The Apostle's Reasoning to the faithful Believers is this, We bave not followed cunningly devised

Fables.

Fables, when we made known unto you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were Eye-witnesses of his Majesty. For he received from God the Father Honour and Glory, when there came such a Voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this Voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy Mount. We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy, 2. Ep. i. 16, &c.

It is evident that the POWER and COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only Point here in question; not a Word is there relating to any other Fact or Doctrine of the Gospel. To prove this Point, the Apostle tells them he had been an Eye-Witness of his MAJESTY OF GLORY. Whilst our Saviour lived on Earth, his Condition was mean, and his Fortune low; this was a great Prejudice against him in the Opinion of the Jews, who expected greater Things from their Redeemer, and could not eafily hope to fee him return in Glory and Power, who lived and died so meanly and so miserably. fufficient Answer to all such Prejudices, to prove, that, mean as he appeared, he had a real Majesty, and was actually invested with Honour and Glory from God the Father.

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But this Evidence manifestly extends but to one part of the Point in question, to shew that Christ had himself been glorified; what is there then to shew that he will ever return again in this Glory and Power ? For allow all this to be true, might an Objector fay; yet how does it prove the Hopes you would raise of his speedy Return in Power and Glory to deliver his Servants, and to take Vengeance of his Foes? For what is past we willingly take your Word; you are a competent Witness of what your Eyes beheld, and of what your Ears heard: But will your feeing him in Glory on the Mount fome Years ago, necessarily infer, that he shall come again in Glory fome Years bence; and that too, to execute the very Purposes you declare? Can any Certainty, as to future Events, be collected from past Events? Or, can any thing we fee this Year, affure us what will happen to us the next?

'Tis true, (we may suppose the Apostle to answer) all future Events are in the Hands of God; to him only are they known, and from him only can they certainly be learned. All other Arguments in this Case can amount only to Probabilities and Presumptions; and a great Presumption it is that Christ shall come in Glory, that we have already seen him glorified; and it is a further Evidence of his

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Power

Power to deliver his Servants, fince God has openly declared him to be his well-beloved Son: But to affure us, that he will indeed for come, and so use his Power, We have a more fure Word of Prophecy : i. e. we have the very Word of God, (speaking by his Prophets) to whom all Futurity is known, to affure us of

the Certainty of this future Event.

This Interpretation, as it is easy and natural in itself, and renders to every Expression in the Text its proper and usual Signification; fo it is necessary, I conceive, to the Apostle's Argument, and plainly enforced by the Context, and stands clear of all Difficulties. Here is no Pretence to fay, that Prophecy is a better Argument for the Truth of the Gospel, than all the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles; for the Truth of the Gospel is not the Point here in question. St. Peter speaks only of the Coming of Christ in Power, and of a Salvation ready to be revealed; which being yet to come, admitted of no furer Evidence than the Word of Prophecy; which yet he tells us, was only as a Light shining in a dark Place: But the Gospel was not a Thing ready to be revealed, it had long fince been revealed, the Gospel was not a Light shining in a dark Place, but, as he himself expresly calls it, a marvellous Light, into which they had been called out of Darkness, 1 Ep. ii. 9. One

One Word more, and I have done with this Subject: The more fure Word of Prophecy here mention'd is not to be understood merely of the Prophecies of the Old Testament, for it may refer to the Prophecies of the New; and probably does, as appears by St. Peter's appealing not only to the antient Prophets, but also to the Preachers of the Gospel. How unhappily then was this Text made choice of, to set up antient Prophecy in Opposition to the Gospel Evidence, since the Prophecy here intended is probably itself a Gospel Evidence, and so far from being superior to all the Miracles of Christ and bis Apostles, that it owes all its Authority to them.

The giving Light to this Passage will furnish us with an Answer to one Objection rais'd against the Authority of this second Epistle of St. Peter. The learned Grotius judg'd from some Characters which he observed in it, that this second Epistle was penn'd after the Destruction of ferusalem; before which St. Peter was dead. But 'tis very evident that the Author of this second Epistle speaks of Christ's Coming in Power and Glory, in the very manner which St. Peter speaks of it in the first Epistle; and indeed with no other View than that of justifying what was deliver'd in the first Epistle. If by the Sal-

vation ready to be revealed, and the Day of Visitation, and Appearing of Jesus Christ, in the first Epistle, we are to understand the Apostle as referring to the Destruction of Jerusalem then near at hand, we must necessarily in the fecond Epistle understand the same Thing by the Power and Coming of our Lord Which Power and Coming was, at Fesus. the Time of writing the second Epistle, so far from being over, that it is treated as a Thing to come; and for the Certainty of which St. Peter had no better Evidence than the Word of Prophecy: Or, if any other Coming of Christ is to be understood in this fecond Epistle, the same must be understood. in the first; for the second is but a Vindication of the Doctrine of the first. And no Notion common to both Epiftles can be an Objection against the second, since the first was never doubted of in the Church. And indeed, whoever reads the two Epistles, and compares them carefully, will fee fuch a Concern in the fecond to support the Sentiments of the first, that he will be inclin'd to think, that the fecond Epistle could come from no other Hand but that which penn'd the first.

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ET us proceed to consider the Character which St. Peter gives of Prophecy, and the Degree of Evidence which we may reaso-

Evidence which we may reasonably expect from it. Prophecy is a Light shining in a dark Place, and we do well to give heed to it until the Day dawn. St. Peter's Meaning is this, "The Time will come when the Things ye hope for shall be placed in a clear Light, when you shall see all your Expectations fully justify'd in the Accomplishment; in the mean while ye do well to attend to Prophecy, tho' but a small glimmering Light, and shining at a small glimmering Light, and shining at a Distance in a dark Place, yet the best you have, or can have at present." Metaphorical Expressions and Similitudes ought not to be rigidly and strictly canvassed; 'tis

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fufficient to see the general Import and Meaning of them; which in the present Case is very clear, and amounts to this, That the Knowledge God gives us of Things suture by the Means of Prophecy, is but an impersect obscure Knowledge, nothing to be compared to the clear Knowledge, that will attend upon the Manisestation of the Things themselves.

I shall endeavour to confirm this Propofition by the Authority of Scripture; and to suggest some Observations which may be of use, when we are called upon to judge of the Nature of Prophecy, and the Evidence arising from it.

Whether Prophecy be a clear Evidence before the Completion, or no, is no Matter of
Controversy; so far from it, that they who
tell us Prophecy is the best Argument even
for Christianity, do not yet think it a clear
one. But without Regard to any Man's
Opinion, it will be proper to see what Notion the inspired Writers themselves had of
the Word of Prophecy.

If we look into the first Epistle of St. Peter, we shall find that the antient Prophecies, of which he speaks in the Text, and which he styles the more fure Word of Prophecy, were not apprehended or clearly understood by ofe

those inspired Persons who delivered them; for there he represents them fearthing what or what manner of Time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did fignify, when it testified beforeband the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that (bould follow, i. 1 1. To the same Purpose our Saviour speaks, Matt. xiii. 17. Many Prophets and righteous Men have defired to see those Things which ye fee, and have not feen them; and to bear those Things which ye hear, and have not heard them. St. Paul gives the like Account of the Gift of Prophecy under the Gospel Dispensation: We know in part, and we prophecy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. Now we see thro' a Glass darkly : but then Face to Face: Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known, 1 Cor.xiii. 9, 10, 12. Now if the Prophets and righteous Men of old, to whom the Word of God came, did not clearly understand the Things which they foretold, but employed themselves in searching and examining the prophetical Testimonies of the Spirit which was in them; if the Prophets of the New Testament knew only in part, and prophefied only in part, feeing but darkly as through a Glass; 'tis most evident that others,

The Prophet Daniel after a very extraordinary Vision, which he reports in his last Chapter, immediately adds, I beard, but I understood not: then faid I, O my Lord, what shall be the End of these Things? And be said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the Words are closed up and sealed till the Time of the End. The Answer here given to Daniel, is very like the Answer which our Saviour gave the Apostles, upon a like Enquiry made by them: They ask, Lord, wilt thou at this Time restore again the Kingdom to Ifrael? and he faid unto them, It is not for you to know the Times or Seasons which the Father bath put in his own Power, Acts i. 6, 7. It did belong to them undoubtedly, and to every believing Jew, to give beed to the Word of Prophecy, according to St. Peter's Exhortation in the Text; and fince it did not belong to them to know the Times and Seasons, 'tis evident the Word of Prophecy was not intended to give a clear and distinct Light in this Case.

These last Passages relate to such Prophecies especially, as seem to design the Times

and Seasons of God's Working: And these Predictions being oftentimes delayed in the Accomplishment much beyond the Expectation of those to whom they were delivered, it brought the Prophets and their Predictions frequently into Contempt; and gave the People Occasion to harden themselves against the Fears and Apprehensions of the Evils threatened. Hence came the Reproach upon the Prophets taken notice of by Ezekiel, The Vision that he seeth is for many Days to come; and he prophesieth of the Times that are far off, xii. 27. Which Speech grew up into a Proverb: What is that Proverb that ye have in the Land of Israel, saying, The Days are prolonged, and every Vision faileth? \$ 22. The Case is very much the same in regard to other Prophecies. Whoever looks into the prophetical Writings, will find that they are generally penned in a very exalted Style, full of bold Figures describing the Judgment or the Mercies of God; representing spiritual Bleffings under the Images of temporal Prosperity, and oftentimes fuch Images as cannot possibly admit of a literal Interpretation. In which Case, tho' we may see the general Intent and Meaning, and find fufficient Ground for Hope and Fear from the Scope of the Prophecy,

phecy, yet we can with no Certainty fix the precise and determinate Manner in which the Words are to be fulfilled.

Prophecy is, by the Author of Prophecy, thus described: I have multiplied Visions, and used Similitudes, by the Ministry of the Prophets; Hosea xii. 10. Which Similitudes are elsewhere spoken of as dark Speeches delivered to the Prophets in Visions and in Dreams, Numb. xii. 6, 8. For this Reason the Yews, when they spoke with Contempt of their Prophets, were used to say, Doth he not speak Parables? Ezek. xx. 49. Our Saviour feems to speak of the antient Prophecies under the fame Character: Know ye not, fays he to his Disciples, this Parable? and how then will ye know all Parables? Mark iv. 13. That is, if ye understand not this plain Parable of the Sower, how will ye understand all the antient Prophecies relating to the Gospel, which are much harder Parables?

These Passages are sufficient to prove that Prophecy was never intended to be a very distinct Evidence; and to shew St. Peter's Meaning in comparing the Word of Prophecy to a Light shining in a dark Place, and in making this Evidence so much inferior to the Evidence we are to receive, when the Fulness

of Time comes for the Manifestation of God's Promises.

But allowing this to be the Case of Prophecy at the Time of Delivery, are we not however to expect to find the Prophecy clear and diffinct, and exactly corresponding to the Event, whenever the Event comes into Existence? and consequently, is it not abfurd, after an Event is come to pass, to apply any ancient Prophecies to it, that do not manifeftly, to the Eyes of Common Sense, appear to belong to it? These Questions being admitted, another will be asked: How comes it to pass, that many of the Prophecies, applied by the Writers of the Gospel to our Saviour and his Actions, are still dark and obfcure; and fo far from belonging evidently to him, and him only, that it requires much Learning and Sagacity to shew even now the Connection between fome Prophecies and the Events?

In answer to these Questions we must observe, That the Obscurity of Prophecy does not arise from hence, that it is a Relation or Description of something future; for 'tis as easy to speak of Things future plainly and intelligibly, as it is of Things past or present. The same Language serves in both Cases with

little

little Variation. He who says the River will overflow its Banks next Year, speaks as plainly as he who says, it did overflow its Banks last Year. It is not therefore of the Nature of Prophecy to be obscure, for it may easily be made, when he who gives it thinks fit, as

plain as History.

On the other Side, a figurative and dark Description of a future Event will be figurative and dark still when the Event happens; and confequently, will have all the Obscurity of a figurative dark Description as well after as before the Event. The Prophet Isaiah describes the Peace of Christ's Kingdom in the following manner: The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall bye down with the Kid, and the Calf, and the young Lion, and the Fatling together, and a little Child shall lead them, xi. 6. No body, I suppose, (some modern Yews excepted) ever understood this literally; nor can it now be literally applied to the State of the Gospel. It was, and is capable of different Interpretations: it may mean temporal Peace, and that, either publick of Kingdoms and Nations, or private among the Professors of the Gospel: it may prefigure an internal and spiritual Peace, the Tranquillity of Mind which fets a Man at Peace

Peace with God, himself, and the World. But whatever the true Meaning is, this Prophecy, expounded by the Rules of Language only, does no more obtrude one determinate Sense upon the Mind fince the Coming of Christ, than it did before. But then we fay, the State of the Gospel was very properly prefigured in this Description, and is as properly prefigured by an hundred more of the like kind; and fince they all agree in a fair Application to the State of the Gospel, we strongly conclude, that the Gospel State was the Thing foretold under these and many other like Expressions. So that the Argument from Prophecy for the Truth of the Gospel does not rest upon this, that the Event has necessarily limited and ascertained the particular Sense and Meaning of every Prophecy; but in this, that every Prophecy has in a proper Sense been compleated by the coming of Christ. 'Tis abfurd therefore to expect clear and evident Conviction from every fingle Prophecy applied to Christ, the Evidence must arise from a View and Comparifon of all together.

Prophecies are not all of one Kind, or of equal Clearness: The most literal Prophecies relating to Christ were not always at the Time

of the Delivery the plainest; for many of these relating to the most surprizing and wonderful Events under the Gospel, wanted not the Veil or Cover of figurative Language; for being plainly foretold, they could hardly, for the feeming Incredibility of the Things themfelves, be received and admitted in their true literal Meaning. A Virgin shall conceive a Son, was a Proposition which seemed to want some other Interpretation than a literal one, which was inconfistent with all Experience of the World: And therefore probably this Prophecy was not understood by the antient Yews, as importing a miraculous Conception. The Event has not made this Prophecy clearer than it was before; the Language of it was as well understood in the Prophets Time as now; but common Sense led every Man to understand it in a Sense agreeable to Nature and Experience: But the Event has shewed us, that the plain literal Sense, however inconfistent with the Experience of Nature, is the true Sense. In like manner the Prophecies from which the Refurrection of Christ is inferred, were obscure and dark, from a seeming Inconsistency between the several Parts of them. It is foretold, that Christ should be despised and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrow and

and Affliction; that his Affliction should purfue him even to the Grave; and 'tis also foretold, that notwithstanding these Sufferings, and a wretched Death, he should prolong bis Days, and have an everlasting Kingdom, and fee the Work of the Lord profper in his Hands. These Prophecies are not at all plainer now than they were in the Beginning: But the plain Sense appeared at that Time loaded with Contradictions; here was one born to Mifery and Affliction, and yet he was the Heir of an everlasting Kingdom: He was condemned, executed, laid in the Grave, and after all this he was to prolong his Days, and fee the Work of the Lord prosper in his Hands. The Refurrection of Christ reconciled all these Difficulties and seeming Inconsistencies; and we now readily admit these Prophecies in their plain literal Sense; which was a very plain Sense before, tho' a very hard one to be imagined or believed. and on I mount leaves

You may observe, then, that the most literal Prophecies have received the greatest Confirmation, and the most Light from the Event. For the Difficulty in this Case not lying in the Darkness or Obscurity of the Expression, but in the seeming Impossibility of the Thing foretold, such seeming Impossibility.

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lity the Event fully cleared: But no Event can make a figurative or metaphorical Expression to be a plain or a literal one; or restrain the Language of any Prophecy to one determinate Sense only, which was original-

ly capable of many.

I have said thus much to shew what sort of Clearness and Evidence we ought to expect from Prophecies after their Accomplishment. 'Tis a great Prejudice against this Argument, when Men come to it expecting more from it than it will yield. This they are led to by hearing it often said, That Prophecy, however dark and obscure at first, grows wonderfully plain upon the Accomplishment: Which in some Cases, as I have shewn, is in Fact true; but is not, cannot be so in all Cases.

You may think it perhaps strange, that I should be here pleading, as it were, for the Obscurity of antient Prophecies; whereas, you may very well conceive, it would be more to the Purpose of a Christian Divine to maintain their Clearness, Now as Moses in another Case said, I would to God all the Lord's People were Prophets; so say I in this Case, I would to God all the Prophecies of the Lord were manifest to all his People. But it matters little what

what we wish for, or think best; we must be content with such Light and Direction as God has thought proper to bestow on us: And to enquire why the antient Prophecies are not clearer, is like enquiring why God has not given us more Reason, or made us as wise as Angels: He has given us in both Cases so much Light, as he thought proper, and enough to serve the Ends he intended.

It is, doubtless, a Mistake to conceive Prophecy to be intended folely or chiefly for their Sakes in whose Time the Events predicted are to happen. What great Occasion is there to lay in fo long beforehand the Evidences of Prophecy to convince Men of Things that are to happen in their own Times; the Truth of which they may, if they pleafe, learn from their own Senses? How low an Idea does it give of the Administration of Providence, in fending Prophets one after another in every Age from Adam to Christ, to imagine, that all this Apparatus was for their Sakes who lived in and after the Times of Christ, with little regard to the Ages to whom the Prophecies were delivered? As I think the Prophecies of the New Testament are chiefly for our Sake, who live by Faith and not by Sight; fo I imagine the antient Prophecies had the like Use, and were chiefly intended

to support the Faith and Religion of the old. World. Had it been otherwise, a Set of Prophecies given some few Years before the Birth of Christ, would have served our Purpose as well as a Series of Prophecies given from the very Beginning, and running thro' every Age. navig and ald : slean A th all

Let us then confider the Use of Prophecy, and this will help us to conceive the Degree of Clearness which ought to attend it. Some People are apt to talk, as if they thought the Truth of some Facts, recorded in the Gospel, depended upon the Clearness of the Prophecies relating to them. They speak, for Instance, as if they imagin'd the Certainty and Reality of our Saviour's Resurrection were much concerned in the Clearness of the Prophecies relating to that great and wonderful Event; and feem to think that they are confuting the Belief of his Resurrection, when they are trying to confound the Prophecies relating to it. But can any thing be more abfurd? For what Ground or Pretence is there to enquire, whether the Prophecies, foreshewing that the Messiab should die and rise again, do truly belong to Jesus, unless we are first satisfied, that Jesus died and rose again? We must be in Possession of the Fact, before we can form any Argument from

rom Prophecy: And therefore the Truth of the Resurrection, considered as a Fact is quite independent of the Evidence or Au-

thority of Prophecy.

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The Part which Unbelievers ought to take in this Question, should be to shew from the Prophets, that Jesus was necessarily to rife from the Dead; and then to prove, that in Fact Jesus never did rise: Here would be a plain Consequence. But if they do not like this Method, they ought to let the Prophecies alone; for if Jesus did not rise, there is no Harm done if the Prophets have not foretold it: and if they allow the Resurrection of Jesus, what do they gain by discrediting the Prophecies? The Event will be what it is, let the Prophecies be what they will.

There are many Prophecies in the old Teftament relating to the Babylonish Captivity, and very distinct they are, describing the Ruin of the holy City, the Destruction of the Temple, the carrying the Tribes into a distant Country, and the Continuance of the Captivity for Seventy Years. Can you suppose these Prophecies intended to convince the People of the Reality of these Events when they should happen? Was there any Danger

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they should imagine themselves safe in their own Country, when they were Captives at Babylon, unless they had the Evidence of Prophecy for their Captivity? Or, that they should think their Temple standing in all its Clory, when it was ruined before their Eyes? If the Supposition be absurd in this Case, it is fo in every Case; for the Argument from Prophecy is in all Instances the same. plain then, that Matters related in the Gofpel do not depend for their Reality upon the Evidence of Prophecy; they may be true, though never foretold, or very obscurely foretold; nay they must be admitted as true, before we can to much as enquire whether any Prophecy belongs to them.

But if this be the Case, that we must admit all the Facts of the Gospel to be true before we can come at the Evidence of Prophecy, what Occasion have we, you'll say, to enquire after Prophecy at all? Are not the many Miracles of Christ, his Resurrection from the Dead, his Ascension to Heaven, the pouring forth the Gifts of the Spirit upon the Apostles, their speaking with Tongues, and doing many Wonders in the Name of Christ, sufficient Evidence to us of the Truth of the Gospel, without troubling ourselves to

know,

know, whether these Things were foretold, or in what Manner they were foretold? To answer this Question plainly, I think such Facts, once admitted to be true, are a compleat Evidence of the divine Authority of a Revelation: And had we known no more of Christ, than that he claimed to be attended to as a Person sent and commissioned by God, he needed no other Credentials than these already mentioned; and it would have been impertinent to demand what Prophet foretold his Coming. For in a like Case, who foretold the Coming of Moles to be a Lawgiver to Ifrael? God had promised Abrabam to give his Posterity the Land of Canaan; but that he would give it by Mofes he had not promised; that he would talk with him Face to Face, and deliver his Law to him, and by him to the People, he had not foretold: The Authority therefore of Mofes, as a divine Lawgiver, stands upon the miraculous Works performed by him, and the wonderful Attestations given to him by the Presence of God in the Mount, in the Eyes of all the People; but upon Prophecy it does not fland, for of him there were no Prophecies: This thews that Prophecy is not an Evidence effen-

tial to the Proof of a divine Revelation; for it may be spared in one as well as another.

But the Case of the Gospel differs from that of the Law; for though the Law was not prophefied of, the Gospel was; he who delivered the Law was one of the first who prophefied of the Gospel, and told the People fo long beforehand, That God would raife a Prophet like unto him, whom they must bear in all Things: By which Prediction he guarded the People against the Prejudice which his own Authority was like to create against a new Lawgiver; telling them beforehand that when the great Prophet came, their Obedience ought to be transferred to him. The fucceeding Prophets speak more fully of the Office, Character, Sufferings, and Glory of the Saviour of Ifrael, and the Defire of all Nations. Now one of the Characters, which our Saviour constantly assumes and claims in the Gospel, is this, That he is the Person spoken of by Moses and the Prophets. Whether he is this Person or no, must be tried by the Words of Prophecy; and this makes the Argument from Prophecy fo far necessary to establish the Claim of the Gospel; and it has been very justly, as well as acutely observed, that the Proof of this Point must rely entirely

on the Evidence of Prophecy. Miracles in this Case can afford no Help; if the Prophets have not spoken of Christ, all the Miracles in the World will not prove that they have spoken of him \*. systedati paragrapes to

These Considerations shew how far the Gospel is necessarily concerned in prophetical Evidence. Christ has done the Works which no Man ever did, and given the fullest Evidence of a Divine Commission; but he claims to be the Person foretold in the Law and the Prophets: and as Truth must ever be consistent with itself, this Claim must be true, or it destroys all others. This is the Point then to be tried on the Evidence of Prophecy: Is Christ that Person described and foretold under the Old Testament, or no? Whether all the Prophecies relating to him be plain, or not plain: Whether all the Ways used by the Jews of arguing from the Old Testament, be convincing to us, or no, it matters little: The fingle Question is, Is there enough plain to shew us that Christ is the Person foretold under the Old Testament? If there is, we are at an End of our Enquiry, and want no further Help from Prophecy; especially since we, to use St. Peter's Expression, bave, in this Grounds and Reasons, p. 31.

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Case, seen the Day dawn, and enjoyed the marvellous Light of the Gofpel of God.

I am not now speaking of the great Advantage that may be made of prophetical Evidence for convincing Unbelievers of the Truth of the Gospel; but am confidering how far the Truth of the Gospel necessarily depends upon this kind of Evidence. These are two very different Enquiries. It is necessary for us to fliew that Christ is the Person promised to be a Saviour to Ifrael; and when we have fhewed this, no Oppoler of the Gospel has more to demand. But we may carry our Enquiries much further; we may contemplate all the Steps of Providence relating to the Salvation and Redemption of Mankind in the feveral Ages of the World, and by a Comparifon of all the Parts, may discern that Christ was indeed the End of the Law, and of all Promifes made to the Fathers: That all the Deliverances given by God to his People were but Shadows, and as it were an Earnest of the great Deliverance he intended to give by his Son: That all the Ceremonials of the Law were Representations of the Substance of the Gospel: That the Aaronical Sacrifices and Priesthood were Figures of better Things to come. But these Enquiries do not stand in the

the Rank of Things to be necessarily proved to every Believer; they do not enter into the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, as the Apostle to the Hebrews expressly tells us; but belong to those who go on to Perfection: Which Distinction given by the Apostle in the Fifth and Sixth Chapters to the Hebrews, is well worth considering, as being a Key to open the true Use of all typical and allegorical Applications of Scripture.



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the Rank of Edines to be a caffered proved to every is lient; they do not enter intoxide Remarkally of the Doller, as the Principally of the Doller, as for Apolite to the Heirezer expressive tells to but belonged those scholers of a respective tells to the hand, I have those given in the Arganisa in the I will appear to the Tells of the appear to the Tells who as well and a read open the arms, the or as trained and an expressive appear the arms, the arms, the oracle of all trained and an expressive and an expre

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T is necessary to take this Matter higher, to look back to the Rise and Progress of divine Prophecy, and to observe what Ends the Wisdom of

God intended to serve by Means of it. 'Tis no Commendation of Prophecy to say that it is very dark and obscure; nor yet can it be a Reproach, provided it answers all the Ends designed by Providence. To enable ourselves therefore to judge of Prophecy, we must enquire to what End Prophecy was given; and this is the Subject I now propose to your Consideration.

It will not be faid, because it cannot be maintained, that we have any Right to the Knowledge

Knowledge of Things future. God is not obliged either in Wisdom or Goodness, and much less in Justice, to declare to us the Things which shall be hereafter. In regard therefore to the Knowledge of Futurity, whether it be little, or much, or nothing that God thinks fit to communicate to us, we can have no Reason to complain; for having no Right, we can pretend no Injury. Since therefore we have no Demand on God for this fort of Knowledge in any degree whatever; 'tis evident that whenever we have it, we must ascribe our having it to some special Reason of Providence: which Reasons alone can limit the Degree of Light and Knowledge which ought to attend upon the Word of Prophecy. For if we have from Prophecy fo much Light as fully answers the End of giving the Prophecy, I would fain know upon what Reafon we can form a Complaint for want of more? I mean this, to shew how absurd it is for Men to take Counsel of their Curiofity, when they confider the Use and Weight of Prophecy: in this View they will find nothing to fatisfy them: they may go on for ever asking, why are we not told more, or more distinctly? Which Questions we may promise to answer, whenever they inform us upon

upon what Right they demand to be told any thing; which if they cannot do, all such Complaints must be laid aside; and we must come to the only proper and material Consideration, What End did the Wisdom of God propose to serve by the antient Prophecies, and how has this End been served by them?

"By Prophecy I understand all the Decla"rations which God has made concerning
"the future State of Mankind in this World,
"or in the next; consequently, all the Hopes
"and Expectations which are grounded on
"God's Promises, and do not result from
"Reason and natural Knowledge, I refer to
"Prophecy, as their Original." If there be
any other kind of Prophecy not comprehended in this Description, there may be,
perhaps, before we take leave of this Subject, a proper Place to consider it; but at present I shall consine myself within the Limits
of this Description.

It cannot be supposed that God has delivered Prophecies only to satisfy or employ the Curiosity of the Inquisitive; or that he gave his Spirit to Men merely to enable them to give forth Predictions for the Amusement and Entertainment of the World: there must be some End intended worthy of the Author.

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What End can you conceive worthy of God but the Promotion of Virtue and Religion, and the general Peace and Happiness of Mankind? These Things belong to him, as Creator and Governor of the World; these

Things are his Province.

'Tis true, you'll say, these Things do belong indeed to God; but what has Prophecy to do with these Things? God can govern the World without letting us into his Secrets; and as for Virtue and Religion and our own Happiness, he has given us a plain Law to walk by, the Result of that Reason and Knowledge with which he has endowed us. Prophecy can never contradict or over-rule the Light of Reason and Nature; nor can we suppose that we came so impersect and unfinished out of the Hands of our Creator, as not to have Light enough to see our own Duty, and to pursue our natural Happiness, but to want at every Turn an Admonisher at out Elbow.

Let us allow the original State of Nature to be as perfect and complete as you defire.

But what if the Case should be altered? how will Matters stand then? 'Tis no unreasonable Supposition, this; for since Man was created a moral Agent, with Freedom of Will, it was possible for him to fall; and conse-

consequently, possibly he may bave fallen. Let us suppose for the present this to be the Case; and tell us now, from Natural Religion, what must such Sinners do? REPENT, you'll say; for it is agreeable to the Goodness of God to accept Repentance, and to restore Offenders to his Favour. Very well; but how often will this Remedy serve? may Sin and Repentance go on for ever in a perpetual Round? To allow this, differs nothing from allowing a Liberty and Impunity to fin without Repentance. If God is Governor and Judge of the World, there must be a Time for Judgment; and Men may, after all reasonable and equitable Allowances made, be ripe for Judgment. Let this be the Case then: Suppose a Man, after all equitable Allowances made, to be condemned under and by the Law of Nature, and living in daily Expectation of Execution: I ask, what fort of Religion you would advise him to in the mean time?-Natural Religion?-To what Purpose?-He has had his Trial and Condemnation by that Law already, and has nothing to learn from it but the Misery of his Condition. I do not mean that the Sense of Natural Religion will be lost in such a Man. He may see, perhaps more clearly than ever he did, the Dif-E 2 ference

ference between Good and Evil, the Beauty of moral Virtue, and feel the Obligations which a rational Creature is under to his Maker: but what Fruit will all this Knowledge yield? what certain Hope or Comfort will it administer? A Man with a Rope about his Neck may fee the Equity and Excellency of the Law by which he dies; and if he does, he must see that the Excellency of it is to protect the Virtuous and Innocent: but what is this Excellency to him, who has forfeited the Protection of all Law? If you would recommend Natural Religion, exclusive of all other Affistance, 'tis not enough to shew from Principles of Reason the Excellency and Reasonableness of moral Virtue, or to prove, from the Nature of God, that he must delight in and reward Virtue: you must go one Step further, and prove from the Nature of Man too, that he is excellently qualified to obey this Law, and cannot well fail of attaining all the Happiness under it that ever Nature designed for him. If you stop short at this Consideration, what do you gain? What imports it that the Law is good, if the Subjects are so bad, that either they will not or cannot obey it? When you prove to Sinners the Excellency of Natural Religion, you only shew them how

how justly they may expect to be punished for their Iniquity: A fad Truth, which wants no Confirmation! All the possible Hope left in fuch a Case is, that God may freely pardon and restore them; but whether he will or no, the Offenders can never certainly learn from Natural Religion.

Should God think fit to be reconciled to Sinners, Natural Religion would again become the Rule of their future Trial and Obedience: but their Hopes must flow from another Spring; their Confidence in God must and can arise only from the Promise of God; that is, from the Word of Prophecy; for which Reason Prophecy must for ever be an effential Part of fuch a Sinner's Religion.

This Reasoning agrees exactly with the antientest and most authentic Account we have of the Beginning of Prophecy in the When God had finished all his World. Works, and Man, the chief of them, he view'd them all, and behold they were very good. How long this Goodness lasted we know not; that it did not last very long is certain. During the Time of Man's Innocence, there were frequent Communications between God and him, but not the least Hint of any Word of Prophecy delivered to him. The Hopes of Nature

Nature were then alive and vigorous, and Man had before him the Prospect of all that Happiness to which he was created, to encourage and support his Obedience. In this State Natural Religion wanted no other Assistance, and therefore it had no other.

But when the Case was altered by the Transgression of our first Parents; when Natural Religion had no longer any sure Hopes or Comforts in reserve, but lest them to the searful Expectation of Judgment near at hand; when God came down to judge the Offenders, and yet with Intention sinally to rescue and preserve them from the Ruin brought on themselves; then came in the Word of Prophecy, not in Opposition to Natural Religion, but in Support of it, and to convey new Hopes to Man, since his own were irrecoverably lost and extinguished in the Fall.

The Prophecy then given being the first, and indeed (as I conceive) the Ground-work and Foundation of all that have been since, it well deserves our particular Consideration.

It may be expected perhaps, that the Way should be cleared to this Enquiry, by removing first the Difficulties which arise from the historical Narration of the Fall; and could could any thing material be added in Support of what is commonly said upon this Subject, the Time and Pains would be well placed: But the more and the oftener this Case is considered in all its Circumstances, the more will the commonly received Interpretation prevail; which is evidently the true antient Interpretation of the Jewish Church, as appears by the Allusions to the History of the Fall, to be met with in the Books of the Old Testament.

To some Unbelievers, if I mistake not their Principles, the History of the Fall would have been altogether as incredible, tho' perhaps not quite so diverting, had it been told

in the fimplest and plainest Language.

'Tis to little purpose therefore to trouble them with an Account of the Genius of the Eastern People, and their Language; for you may as soon persuade them that a Serpent tempted Eve, as that any evil Spirit did. If you ask, why the Devil might not as well speak to Eve under the Form of a Serpent, as give out Oracles to the old Heathen World under that and many other Forms? you gain nothing by the Question: for Oracles, whether Heathen or Jewish, are to them alike; they dispute not their Authority, but their Reality.

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This is a Degree of Unbelief which has no Right to be admitted to debate the Question now under Consideration.

As to others, who are not Infidels with regard to Religion in general, yet are shock'd with the Circumstances of this History; I defire them to consider, that the Speculations arising from the History of the Fall, and the Introduction of natural and moral Evil into the World, are of all others the most abstruse, and furthest removed out of our Reach: that this Difficulty led Men in the earliest Time to imagine two independent Principles of Good and Evil; a Notion destructive of the Sovereignty of God, the Maintenance of which is the principal End and Design of the Mosaic History. Had the History of Man's Fall plainly introduced an invisible evil Being, to confound the Works of God, and to be the Author of Iniquity, it might have given great Countenance to this Error of two Principles: or, to prevent it, Moses must have writ an History of the Angels Fall likewise; a Point, I suppose, to which his Commission did not extend, and of which, perhaps, we are not capable Judges: and fince this Difficulty might in a great measure be avoided, by having recourse to the common Usage of the Eastern

Eastern Countries, which was, to clothe History in Parables and Similitudes, it seems not improbable that for this Reason the History of the Fall was put into the Dress in which we now find it.

The Serpent was remarkable for an insidious Cunning, and therefore stood as a proper Emblem of a Deceiver; and yet, being one of the lowest of the Creatures, the Emblem gave no Suspicion of any Power concerned that might pretend to rival the Creator.

This Method has not fo obscured this History, but that we may with great Certainty come to the Knowledge of all that is necesfary for us to know. Let us consider the History of Moses, as we should do any other antient Eastern History of like Antiquity: Suppose, for Instance, that this Account of the Fall had been preserved to us out of Sanchoniatho's Phenician History: We should in that Case be at a Loss, perhaps, to account for every Manner of Representation, for every Figure and Expression in the Story; but we should soon agree, that all these Difficulties were imputable to the Manner and Customs of his Age and Country; and should shew more Respect to so venerable a Piece of Antiquity, than to charge it with Want of Sense, because

Tis no unreasonable Thing surely to demand the same Equity of you in interpreting the Sense of Moses, as you would certainly use towards any other antient Writer. And if the same Equity be allowed, this plain Fast undeniably arises from the History: "That Man was tempted to Disobestidence, and did disobey, and forseited all "Tale to Happiness, and to Life itself; that "God judged him, and the Deceiver likewise" under the Form of a Serpent." We require no more; and will proceed upon this Fact to consider the Prophecy before us.

The Prophecy is Part of the Sentence paffed upon the Deceiver; the Words are these:

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I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman. and between thy Seed and her Seed: It shall bruife thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel: Gen. iii. 15. Christian Writers apply this to our blessed Saviour, emphatically styled here the Seed of the Woman, and who came in the Fulness of Time to bruise the Serpent's Head, by destroying the Works of the Devil, and restoring those to the Liberty of the Sons of God, who were held under the Bondage and Captivity of Sin. You'll fay, What unreasonable Liberty of Interpretation is this? Tell us, by what Rules of Language, the Seed of the Woman is made to denote one particular Person, and by what Art you discover the Mystery of Christ's miraculous Conception and Birth in this common Expression? Tell us, likewife, how bruifing the Serpent's Head comes to fignify the destroying the Power of Sin, and the Redemption of Mankind by Chrift? 'Tis no wonder to hear fuch Questions from those who look no further than to the Third Chapter of Genefis, to fee the Ground of the Christian Application. As the Prophecy stands there, nothing appears to point out this particular Meaning; much less to confine the Prophecy to it. But of this hereafter. Let us for the present lay aside all our own Notions, and go back to that State and

and Condition of Things, which was at the Time of the Delivery of this Prophecy; and fee (if haply we may discover it) what God intended to discover at that Time by this Prophecy, and what we may reasonably suppose our first Parents understood it to mean.

They were now in a State of Sin, standing before God to receive Sentence for their Disobedience, and had Reason to expect a full Execution of the Penalty threatened, In the Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. But God came in Mercy as well as Judgment, purpofing not only to punish, but to restore Man. The Judgment is awful and fevere: the Woman is doomed to Sorrow in Conception; the Man to Sorrow and Travel all the Days of his Life; the Ground is curfed for his fake; and the End of the Judgment is, Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shalt return. Had they been left thus, they might have continued in their Labour and Sorrow for their appointed Time, and at last returned to Dust, without any well-grounded Hope or Confidence in God: They must have looked upon themselves as rejected by their Maker, delivered up to Trouble and Sorrow in this World, and as having no Hope in any other. Upon this Foot.

Foot, I conceive, there could have been no Religion left in the World; for a Sense of Religion without Hope, is a State of Phrenzy and Distraction, void of all Inducements to Love and Obedience, or any thing else that is praise-worthy. If therefore God intended to preserve them as Objects of Mercy, it was absolutely necessary to communicate so much Hope to them, as might be a rational Foundation for their future Endeavours to reconcile themselves to him by a better Obedience. This feems to be the primary Intention of this first divine Prophecy; and it was necessary to the State of the World, and the Condition of Religion, which could not possibly have been supported without the Communication of fuch Hopes. The Prophecy is excellently adapted to this Purpose, and manifestly conveyed fuch Hopes to our first Parents. For let us confider in what Sense we may suppose them to understand this Prophecy. Now they must necessarily understand the Prophecy, either according to the literal Meaning of the Words, or according to such Meaning as the whole Circumstance of the Transaction, of which they are a Part, does require. If we suppose them to understand the Words literally, and that God meant them fo to be under-

understood, this Passage must appear ridiculous. Do but imagine that you fee God coming to judge the Offenders; Adam and Eve before him in the utmost Distress; that you hear God inflicting Pains and Sorrows and Misery and Death upon the First of human Race; and that in the midst of all this Scene of Woe and great Calamity, you hear God foretelling, with great Solemnity, a very trivial Accident that should sometimes happen in the World: That Serpents would be apt to bite Men by the Heels, and that Men would be apt to revenge themselves by striking them on the Head. What has this Trifle to do with the Loss of Mankind, with the Corruption of the natural and moral World, and the Ruin of all the Glory and Happiness of the Creation? Great Comfort it was to Adam, doubtless, after telling him that his Days should be short and full of Misery, and his End without Hope, to let him know, that he should now and then knock a Snake on the Head, but not even that, without paying dear for his poor Victory, for the Snake should often bite him by the Heel. Adam, furely, could not understand the Prophecy in this Sense, tho' some of his Sons have so understood it; a plain Indication how much

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more some Men are concerned to maintain a literal Interpretation of Scripture than they are to make it speak common Sense. Leaving this therefore as absolutely absurd and ridiculous, let us confider what Meaning the Circumstances of the Transaction do necessarily fix to the Words of this Prophecy. Adam tempted by his Wife, and she by the Serpent, had fallen from their Obedience, and were now in the Presence of God expecting Judgment. They knew full well at this Juncture, that their Fall was the Victory of the Serpent, whom by Experience they found to be an Enemy to God and to Man; to Man, whom he had ruined by feducing him to Sin; to God, the noblest Work of whose Creation he had defaced. It could not therefore but be fome Comfort to them to hear the Serpent first condemned, and to see that, however he had prevailed against them, he had gained no Victory over their Maker, who was able to affert his own Honour, and to punish this great Author of Iniquity. By this Method of God's Proceeding they were secured from thinking that there was any evil Being equal to the Creator in Power and Dominion: An Opinion which gained Ground in Aftertimes, through Prevalency of Evil; and is, where

where it does prevail, destructive of all true Religion. The Condemnation therefore of the Serpent was the Maintenance of God's Supremacy; and that it was fo understood, we have, if I mistake not, a very antient Testimony in the Book of Job: With God is Strength and Wisdom, the Deceived and the Deceiver are his; i. e. equally subjected to his Command, Job xii. 16. The Belief of God's supreme Dominion, which is the Foundation of all Religion, being thus preserved, it was still necessary to give them such Hopes as might make them capable of Religion toward God. These Hopes they could not but conceive, when they heard from the Mouth of God, that the Serpent's Victory was not a compleat Victory over even themselves; that they and their Posterity should be enabled to contest his Empire; and tho' they were to fuffer much in the Struggle, yet finally they should prevail and bruise the Serpent's Head, and deliver themselves from his Power and Dominion over them. What now could they conceive this Conquest over the Serpent to mean? Is it not natural to expect that we shall recover that by Victory, which we lost by being defeated? They knew that the Enemy had subdued them by Sin, could they

hen conceive Hopes of Victory otherwise than by Righteoufness? They loft thro' Sin the Happiness of their Creation, could they expect less from the Return of Righteousness than the Recovery of the Bleffings forfeited? What else but this could they expect? For the certain Knowledge they had of their Loss when the Serpent prevailed, could not but lead them to a clear Knowledge of what they should regain by prevailing against the Serpent. The Language of this Prophecy is indeed in part metaphorical, but it is a great Mistake to think that all Metaphors are of uncertain Signification; for the Defign and Scope of the Speaker, with the Circumstances attending, create a fixed and determinate Sense. Were it otherwise, there would be no Certainty in any Language; all Languages, the Eastern more especially, abounding in Metaphors.

Let us now look back to our Subject, and fee what Application we are to make of this Instance.

This Prophecy was to our first Parents but very obscure; it was, in the Phrase of St. Peter, but a Light shining in a dark Place: All that they could certainly conclude from it. was, that their Case was not desperate; that fome

fome Remedy, that some Deliverance from the Evil they were under, would in Time appear; but when, or where, or by what Means, they could not understand: Their own Sentence, which returned them back again to the Dust of the Earth, made it difficult to apprehend what this Victory over the Serpent should fignify, or how they, who were shortly to be Dust and Ashes, should be the better for it. But after all that can be urged upon this Head to fet out the Obscurity of this Promise, I would ask one Queftion: Was not this Promise, or Prophecy, tho' furrounded with all this Obscurity, a Foundation for Religion and Trust and Confidence towards God after the Fall, in hopes of Deliverance from the Evils introduced by Disobedience? If it was, it fully answered the Necessity of their Case, to whom it was given, and manifested to them all that God intended to make manifest. They could have had towards God no Religion, without some Hopes of Mercy: It was necessary therefore to convey fuch Hopes; but to tell them how these Hopes should be accomplished, at what Time and Manner precifely, was not necesfary to their Religion. And what now is to be objected against this Prophecy? It is very obscure,

obscure, you say; so it is; but it is obscure in the Points which God did not intend to explain at that Time; and which were not necessary to be known. You see a plain Reason for giving this Prophecy, and as far as the Reason for giving the Prophecy extends, so far the Prophecy is very plain: 'Tis obscure only, where there is no Reason why it should be plain; which furely is a Fault eafily to be forgiven, and very far from being a proper

Subject for Complaint.

But if this Prophecy conveyed to our first Parents only a general Hope and Expectation of Pardon and Restoration, and was intended by God to convey no more to them; how come we, their Posterity, to find so much more in this Promise than we suppose them to find? How is it that we pretend to discover Christ in this Prophecy, to see in it the Mystery of his Birth, his Sufferings, and his final Triumph over all the Powers of Darkness? By what new Light do we discern all these Secrets, by what Art do we unfold them?

'Tis no Wonder to me, that such as come to the Examination of the Prophecies applied to Christ, expecting to find in each of them some express Character and Mark of Christ,

plainly to be understood as such antecedently to his Coming, should ask these, or many other the like Questions; or that the Argument from antient Prophecy should appear so slight and trivial to those who know no better Use of it.

Known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning; and whatever Degree of Light he thought fit to communicate to our first Parents, or to their Children in After-times, there is no doubt but that He had a perfect Knowledge at all Times of all the Methods by which he intended to rescue and restore Mankind: and therefore all the Notices given by him to Mankind of his intended Salvation, must correspond to the great Event, whenever the Fulness of Time shall make it manifest. No Reason can be given why God should at all Times, or at any Time, clearly open the Secrets of his Providence to Men; it depends merely upon his good Pleasure to do it in what Time and in what Manner he thinks proper. But there is a necessary Reason to be given why all fuch Notices as God thinks fit to give, should answer exactly in due Time to the Completion of the great Design. It is abfurd therefore to complain of the antient Pro-

Prophecies for being obscure, for it is challenging God for not telling us more of his Secrets. But if we pretend that God has at length manifested to us by the Revelation of the Gospel the Method of his Salvation, it is necessary for us to shew, that all the Notices of his Salvation given to the old World do correspond to the Things which we have heard and feen with our Eyes. The Argument from Prophecy therefore is not to be formed in this manner; " All the " antient Prophecies have expresly pointed " out and characterized Christ Jesus :" But it must be formed in this manner; "All " the Notices which God gave to the Fa-" there of his intended Salvation are per-" fectly answered by the coming of Christ." He never promised or engaged his Word in any Particular relating to the Common Salvation, but what he has fully made good by fending his Son to our Redemption. Let us try these Methods upon the Prophecy before us. If you demand that we should shew you, à priori, Christ Jesus set forth in this Prophecy, and that God had limited himself by this Promise to convey the Blesfing intended by fending his own Son in the Flesh, and by no other Means whatever;

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you demand what I cannot shew, nor do I know who can. But if you enquire, whether this Prophecy, in the obvious and most natural Meaning of it, in that Sense in which our first Parents, and their Children after, might eafily understand it, has been verified by the Coming of Christ; I conceive it may be made as clear as the Sun at Noonday, that all the Expectations raised by this Prophecy has been compleatly answered by the Redemption wrought by Christ Jesus. And what have you to defire more than to fee a Prophecy fulfilled exactly? If you infift that the Prophecy should have been more express, you must demand of God why he gave you no more Light; but you ought at least to suspend this Demand till you have a Reason to shew for it.

I know that this Prophecy is urged further, and that Christian Writers argue from the Expression of it, to shew that Christ is therein particularly foretold: He properly is the Seed of a Woman in a Sense in which no other ever was; his Sufferings were well presigured by the bruising of the Heel, his compleat Victory over Sin and Death by bruising the Serpent's Head. When Unbelievers hear such Reasonings, they think themselves

themselves entitled to laugh; but their Scorn be to themselves. We readily allow, that the Expressions do not imply necessarily this Sense; we allow further, that there is no Appearance that our first Parents understood them in this Sense: or that God intended they should so understand them: But fince this Prophecy has been plainly fulfilled in Christ, and by the Event appropriated to him only; I would fain know how it comes to be conceived to be fo ridiculous a thing in us, to suppose that God, to whom the whole Event was known from the Beginning, (\*) should make choice of fuch Expressions, as naturally conveyed so much Knowledge as he intended to convey to our first Parents, and yet should appear in the Fulness of Time to have been peculiarly adapted to the Event which he from the Beginning faw, and which he intended the World should one Day see; and which

The Works of the Lord are done in Judgment from the Beginning: And from the Time be made them, he disposed the Parts thereof, Ecclus xvi. 26.

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<sup>(\*)</sup> Remember the former Things of old, for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me: declaring the End from the Beginning, and from antient Times the Things that are not yet done; saying, My Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my Pleasure, Isa. xlvi. 9, 10.

The Works of the Lord are done in Judgment from the Be-

when they should see, they might the more easily acknowledge to be the Work of his Hand, by the secret Evidence which he had inclosed from the Days of old in the Words of Prophecy. However the Wit of Man may despise this Method, yet is there nothing in it unbecoming the Wisdom of God. And when we see this to be the Case, not only in this Instance, but in many other Prophecies of the Old Testament, it is not without Reason we conclude, that under the Obscurity of antient Prophecy there was an Evidence of God's Truth kept in Reserve, to be made manifest in due Time.

As this Prophecy is the first, so it is the only considerable one, in which we have any Concern from the Creation to the Days of Noah. What has been discoursed therefore upon this Occasion, may be understood as an Account of the first Period of Prophecy. Under this Period the Light of Prophecy was proportioned to the Wants and Necessities of the World, and sufficient to maintain Religion after the Fall of Man, by affording sufficient Grounds for Trust and Confidence in God; without which Grounds, which could then no otherways be had but by Promise from God, Religion could not have

have been supported in the World. This Prophecy was the Grand Charter of God's Mercy after the Fall; Nature had no certain Help for Sinners liable to Condemnation; her Right was loft with her Innocence: It was necessary therefore either to destroy the Offenders, or to fave them by raising them to a Capacity of Salvation, by giving them such Hopes as might enable them to exercise a reasonable Religion. So far the Light of Prophecy extended. By what Means God intended to work his Salvation, he did not expresly declare; and who has a Right to complain that he did not; or to prescribe to him Rules in dispensing his Mercy to the Children of Men? This Prophecy we, upon whom the latter Days are come, have feen fully verified: more fully than those to whom it was delivered could perhaps conceive. View this Prophecy, then, with respect to those to whom it was given, it answered their Want and the immediate End proposed by God; view it with respect to ourselves, and it answers ours; and shall we still complain of its Obscurity?

The bringing in of *Prophecy* was not the only Change in the State of Religion occafioned by the Fall. Sacrifice came in at the

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same Time, as appears by the course of the History; and it is hardly possible it should come in, especially at the Time it did, any otherwise than upon the Authority of Divine Institution. It is the first Act of Religion mentioned in the facred Story to be accepted by God; which implies strongly that it was of his own Appointment: for we can hardly suppose that such a Mark of Distinction would have been fet upon a mere buman Invention. In later Times, when the Account of Things grows clearer, Sacrifice appears to be appointed by God as an Expiation for Sin; and we have no Reason to imagine that it was turned aside from its original Use. There is, indeed, no express Declaration of the Uje of Sacrifice in Religion at its first Appearance, and yet formething there feems to be in the Account that may give Light in this Matter. We read, that Cain brought an Offering of the Fruit of the Ground, and Abel of the Firstlings of his Flock, and the Fat thereof: The Lord had Respect unto Abel and to bis Offering; but unto Cain and to bis Offering be bad not Respect. Allowing the Maxim of the Jewish Church to have been good from the first Institution of Sacrifice, That without Blood there is no Re-

Remission, the Case may possibly be this : Abel came a Petitioner for Grace and Pardon, and brought the Atonement appointed for Sin; Cain appears before God as a just Person wanting no Repentance; he brings an Offering in Acknowledgment of God's Goodness and Bounty, but no Atonement in Acknowledgment of his own Wretchedness. The Expostulation of God with Coin favours this Account; If theu doft well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doft not well, Sin lieth at thy Door: i. c. If thou art righteous, thy Righteousness shall save thee: if thou art not, by what Expiation is thy Sin purged? It lieth still at thy Door. Add to this, that the Apostle to the Hebrews says, that Abel's Sacrifice was rendered excellent by Faith: What could this Faith be, but a Reliance on the Promises and Appointments of God? Which Faith Cain wanted, relying on his well-doing.

If you admit this Interpretation, it plainly shews that the true Religion instituted by God has been one and the same from the Fall of Adam, subsisting ever upon the same Principles of Faith; at first upon only general and obscure Hopes, which were gradually opened and unfolded in every Age till the

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better Days came, when God thought good to call us into the marvellous Light of his Gospel.

This Piece of History is all the Account we have of the Religion of the Ante-diluvian World: It was proper to be considered for the Relation there is between Prophecy and the State of Religion in the World; and for this Reason also, because Sacrifice may perhaps be found to be one kind of Prophecy or Representation of the one great Sacrifice once offered for the Sins of the World.

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if thou set not, by what Expiation is thy bin purges at histherith will at thy Door. Add to this, that the Apostle to the Estreet says, that the Sacrither was rendered excellent by Fairb: What constitute Fairb be, but a Schiance of Cook! What constitute Fairb be, but a sing on his well-destruction, it plainly into the true design instituted by that the true design instituted by Fairb of Lamp and the James from the James plain of Lamp and the James from the James plain of Lamp and the James plain the James plain of Frith; at first upon only general and object of Frith; at first upon only general and until ded in every Age of the better opened and until ded in every Age of the

DISCOURSE

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# DISCOURSE IV.

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Prophecy, and its first Entrance into the World, and what Meafure of Light and Hope it brought with it. The next

Enquiry is, to examine by what Degrees this Promise was opened and unfolded in the succeeding Ages of the World; and to trace the Methods of Divine Providence in preparing all Things for its Accomplishment.

If we consider the first Prophecy as the Foundation of those Hopes, in which all the Sons of Adam have an Interest; in which the Ages yet to come, as well as the present and those already past, are concerned; we shall not wonder to find that the Administrations of Providence have had in all Ages relation to this Prophecy, and shall have, till the End of all Things brings with it the appointed Time for the full Accomplishment.

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One thing, I presume, will be easily granted, because it cannot be easily denied; that if the antient Prophecies which concern the general State and Condition of Man with regard either to this World or the next, are indeed divine Oracles, there must be a Consistency in the whole; and how dark or obscure soever some Part of them might be at the first Delivery, and for Generations asterwards, yet must they in the Event confpire and centre in that great End which was always in the View of Providence: Known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning of the World, Acts xv. 18.

Taking then this Prophecy to contain the Purpose of God with respect to Mankind; the Administrations of Providence, together with such surther Declarations as God has thought fit to make, must needs be the best

Comment to help us to its Meaning.

The Account we have of the Ante-Alluvian World is very short, and conveys but little Knowledge to us of the Religion of those Times, or of the Hopes and Expectations then entertained: Yet something there is to shew that the Curse of the Fall was remembered and selt during that Period; and that those who preserved a Sense of Religion, had

an Expectation of being delivered from the Curse; which could be grounded, as far as appears, upon nothing but the Prophecy already mentioned.

Noah was born in the eleventh Century after the Fall, and at the Time of his Birth, his Father Lamech, by the Spirit of Prophecy, declared, This same shall comfort us concerning our Work and Toil of our Hands, because of the Ground which the Lord bath

cursed, Gen. v. 19.

This Passage is a very material one, and, confidered in all its Views, will give some Light to the State and Condition of the World during this Period. We may, I think, from hence fairly collect, 1. That the Curse upon the Ground subsisted in all its Rigour to the Days of Lamech; and that the Work and Toil necessary to raise from the Ground a sufficient Support for Life, was a grievous and irkfome Burden. There is no Reason to imagine, but that Lamech had as good a Share of the Things of the World as any other in his Time; and yet he fpeaks of the Labour and Toil of Life, much more like a Man reporting what he had felt, than what he had only feen. 2. That there was an Expectation in his Time, at least among those who had

not quite forgot God, of a Deliverance from the Curse of the Fall. Lamech's Prophecy does not introduce this Expectation, but is grounded upon it: He feems to speak to such as had the same common Hope with himself of a Deliverance to come; and points out to them the Child then born as the Instrument defigned by Providence to ease them of their Burden. THIS SAME shall comfort us: i.e. This is the Seed of the Woman, the Heir of the Promise, the Effect of which shall be seen in his Time. 3. That the antient Expectation, founded on the Prophecy given at the Fall, was not of an immediate and fudden Deliverance. Above a Thousand Years were passed from the Curse to the Birth of Noab, and yet the Expectation of Deliverance continued; whereas, had the Notion been, that the Prophecy was to be immediately fulfilled, the Delay had been long enough to tire out their Patience and their Hopes. 4. That the antient Expectation was not that the World should be delivered all at once from the whole Curse of the Fall. Lamech, who so well remembered the Lord's Curfe upon the Ground, cannot be supposed to forget the greater Curse upon Man: Dust thou art, and to Dust thou Thalt return. And yet from this Part of the Curfe

Curse he gives no Hopes of Deliverance; Noah was not the Seed who should bring. Life and Immortality to Light; of him he only foretells, that he should save them from the Labour and Toil of their Hands; and leaves the Hopes of Deliverance from the greater Curse to stand as they did, upon the Faith of the first Prophecy. This Notion of a gradual Deliverance from the old Curse is agreeable to all that has happened since, and to the present State of Things under the Gospel: It is frequently to be met with in the inspired Writers, particularly in St. Paul, who tells us, THE LAST Enemy that shall be destroyed is Death.

In Consequence of this Exposition of the Prediction of Lamech, it must be maintained, that the Prophecy has been verified in the Event: That the Earth has been restored from the Curse laid on it at the Fall, and now enjoys the Effect of the Blessing bestowed on Noah. There will arise many Prejudices, I am sensible, against this Notion now advanced. In the first Place, the Prophecy which was given at the Fall has been usually appropriated to Christ Jesus, and to the Deliverance we expect from him by the Restoration of Life and Immortality; and it

may be thought perhaps no good Service to give any other Person a Share in this Pro-

phecy.

In answer to this, I have some few Observations to offer: 1. That the Curse of the Fall manifestly consists of several Parts: Man was doomed to a Life of Labour and Sorrow here, the Ground cursed for his Sake, and he condemned to feek his Food in the Sweat of his Brow: and after this Life ended, he was fentenced to return to the Dust from whence he was taken. 2. The Prophecy given as a Support to Man under this Curfe, mentions no kind of Deliverance particularly, but conveys a general Hope, which is limited to no one Circumstance of the Curse more than another; and is therefore naturally understood to relate to the Whole. 3. Should there appear Reason sufficient to induce us to think that this Prophecy has already, in part, had its Completion, and that the one Part of the Curse has been already removed; it will be fo far from weakening, that it will mightily fupport and strengthen our Hopes of seeing the Whole removed in God's own Time. 4. It ought to be no Objection, that this Prophecy is supposed to point out more Events, or more Persons than one. This is according

to the Analogy of the antient Prophecies. And why may not this Prophecy mean Noah and Christ, as well as many others mean David

and Christ, Solomon and Christ, &c.

Another Prejudice will arise from the common Notion of the present and past State of the Earth. Instead of seeing any Alteration for the better, according to the Prophecy of Lamech, Men think they see an Alteration for the worse in every Age: Nature seems to them to be almost spent and worn out, and less able to provide for her Children now than formerly. These are the Sentiments of the present Age, and they were so of those past. We meet with many Reflections of this kind in grave and ferious Authors: St. Cyprian, I remember, complains that Things were fenfibly grown worse even in the Compass of his own Time; that the Seasons of the Year were not so pleasant, nor the Fruits of the Earth fo delightful and refreshing as he remembered them. I wonder not at his Judgment; for I find myself every Day growing into the same Opinion. The best and the choicest Fruits served up at the Tables of the Great, have no such Relish as those, which they once provided for themselves when they were young: And many there are who can

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now find but few Days good enough to be abroad, who yet can remember when there were few bad enough to keep them at home. Such Observations, therefore, as these, shew how much Men alter themselves; but they

fhew nothing else.

But this Prejudice has a greater Support from antient Tradition: We read of a Golden Age, when Peace and Plenty reigned, when Fraud and Violence were little known. The old Writers, to whom we are indebted for this Piece of Knowledge, fet off the Story, by mixing with it great Complaints of their own Times; that Iron Age, as they call it, in which they lived. From these Authorities many have been led to think that the Curse upon the Earth has been ever growing and shall grow till the End of all Things.

But it ought to be considered, that the most antient Writers, to whom we are beholden for these Accounts, lived at fuch a Distance of Time from the Flood, that we may very well suppose that they had little Knowledge of any Antiquity beyond it. They might well call the Times foon after the Flood antient Times, for fo they were with respect to their own; and there is no

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Pretence for thinking that they knew any thing of the Manner of Living before the Flood. They might possibly have some obscure Tradition of the Paradisiacal State; but if they had, they confounded it with their Golden Age, which plainly was a very different Thing. Now the Ages next the Flood afforded Ground enough for this antient Tradition, without supposing any such Alterations in the State of the Earth as are commonly imagined. The Earth was in a poor Condition indeed after the Flood, if it could not afford Plenty for the few Inhabitants; and what Occasion was there for Fraud and Violence when every Man had more than enough? When Men increased, and the Earth was divided in Property, the Case altered; fome had more than enough, and some much less, and every Man grew concerned to be rich, and applied to the Arts of Fraud, or to open Violence, as they best served his Purpose. Here then is the Golden Age; and here is the Iron Age. The first happy State continued even to Abraham's Time: He and Lot were Strangers in the Land of Canaan; they had great Flocks and Herds with them, and yet what Plenty did they enjoy? When their Servants quarreled about some Conveniencies

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in feeding their Cattle, Abrabam, as if he had been Lord of the whole Soil, offers Lot his Choice of the Country for his Cattle. Is not the whole Land before thee? - If thou wilt take the Left Hand, then will I go to the Right; or if thou depart to the Right Hand, then I will go to the Left. Such a Dispute in these Days would be attended probably with Strife and Violence, with Fraud and Deceit, and perpetual Feuds and Animofities between the contending Parties: In Abraham's Time the very Plenty the World enjoyed put an End to the Quarrel; not that the World is worse now than it was antiently, but Men are now fo multiplied, and the Earth fo divided and fettled in Property, that private Men are not left to their Choice to fettle where they pleafe. Some small Parts of the Earth, lying near Towns, and Places of Habitation, were in Abraham's Time possessed in Property, as we learn from the Purchase which he made of a Burying-place. But he was no Purchaser or Proprietor of the Country, where he fed his Cattle, and yet he met with no Disturbance.

Setting aside, therefore, these Prejudices, let us examine what the Truth of the Case is, according to the Best Light now remaining.

If you consult Interpreters for the Mean-

ing of Lamech's Prediction; some will tell you, that Noah found out proper Tools and Instruments of Husbandry, which was a great Abatement to the Labour and Toil of Tillage: but of this there is no Proof; and it is much more likely, that a Descendent of Cain's was the Inventor of fuch Tools, than that Noab was. We read nothing of Noab's Skill in this way: But we read of Tubal Cain that he was an Instructor of every Artificer in Brass and Iron: And can it be imagined that there were Artificers in Iron fo early as Tubal Cain, and no Application of the Art to the Works of Husbandry till Noab's Time? Some will tell you, that Noah first invented the Art of making Wine; a Liquor that chears the Heart, and makes Men forget Sorrow and Trouble; but neither for this is there any Proof. We read that after the Flood, he began to be an Husbandman, and planted a Vineyard; but as he was not the first Husbandman in the World, fo neither can it be concluded from hence, that he was the first Vine-dresser.

Others are of Opinion, that there is nothing prophetical in Lamech's Declaration, and that he had no View but to the Circumstances of his own Family. He rejoiced, they fay, to see a Son born who might in Time be

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affifting to him in the Toil of cultivating the Ground. According to this Interpretation, Noah was so far from being marked out as the Person who shall alleviate the Labour and Toil of the World, that his Father rejoiced only that he was come to take his Share of it, and to be his Fellow-labourer, But is there any thing in this particular to Noah? Is not every Son born to affift his Father? and may not Lamech's Words be applied by every Father at the Birth of every Son? Why then is this Speech reported of Lamech only? Why is a peculiar Name, with Reference to this Declaration, given to Noab, if there was no peculiar Reason for it?

The Jewish Interpreters are generally agreed to expound the Words of Lamech as importing a Deliverance to be granted from the Labour and Toil of Tillage, occasioned by the Curse on the Ground: And some of them suppose the Words to have a regard to the Restoration of the World thro' Neab and his Sons. But the Scripture itself will be our best Guide in this Case; thither let us go.

Lamech foretells that his Son Noah should comfort them concerning the Works and Toil of their Hands, because of the Ground which the Lord bad curfed. When God informs Noah

of his Defign to destroy the World, he adds, But with thee will I establish my Covenant. Lamech expected, in virtue of God's Promife, a Deliverance from the Curfe of the Earth, and foresees that Deliverance would come thro' his Son. When God threatens to destroy the Earth, and compleat the Curse he had laid on it, he thinks upon his Covenant, and promises Noah the Benefit of it: What Covenant was this that had fuch immediate relation to the Destruction of the World? What could it be but the very Promise which Lamech saw should be made good to Noab; and which is here actually conveyed to Noah by a new Promise? The Words, I will establish my Covenant, must relate to a Covenant then subfifting, and not to a Covenant afterwards to be made; as will be evident to those who will examine the Import of this Phrase in Scripture. But to proceed:

The Flood being over, God declares, I will not again curfe the Ground any more for Man's fake. It appears from this Declaration, 1. That the Flood was the Effect of that Curfe which was denounced against the Earth for Man's sake. 2. That the old Curfe was fully executed and accomplished in the Flood. In consequence of which Discharge

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from the Curse, a new Bleffing is immediately pronounced upon the Earth; While the Earth remaineth, Seed-time and Harvest, and Cold and Heat, and Summer and Winter, and Day and Night shall not cease, Gen. viii. 22. This is called a Covenant between God and the Earth, ch. ix. ver. 13. And a Covenant with Noah and his Seed, and with every living Creature, of the Fowl, of the Cattle, and of every Beaft of the Field, ver. 8, 9, 10. and in Truth a Bleffing, on the Earth, is properly a Bleffing not only on Man, but on all living Creatures which fubfift on the Earth: And it is with respect to this Covenant that the Pfalmist breaks forth into the Admiration of God's Goodness. Thy Mercy, O Lord, is in the Heavens, and thy Faithfulness reacheth unto the Clouds. Thy Righteousness is like the great Mountains, thy Judgments are a great Deep: O Lord thou preservest MAN and BEAST, Pfal. xxxvi. 5, 6.

When Adam was first formed and placed on the Earth, he had several Blessings and Privileges conferred on him by God. These were forfeited by the Fall. What will you say if you see these very Blessings restored again to Noah and his Posterity after the Flood? Whether this be the Case or no, will soon appear

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upon a Comparison of the Blessings given to one and the other. To Adam and Eve God said, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the Earth, Gen. i. 28. To Noah and his Sons he says, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the Earth, ix. 1. To our first Parents it is said, Have Dominion over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and over every living Thing that moveth on the Earth, Gen. i. 28. To Noah and his Sons it is said, The Fear of you and the Dread of you shall be upon every Beast of the Earth, and upon every Fowl of the Air, and upon all that moveth upon the Earth, and upon all Fishes of the Sea, into your Hand are they delivered, Gen. ix. 2.

To Adam and Eve are granted for Food, every Herb bearing Seed---and every Tree, in the which is the Fruit of a Tree yielding Seed, Gen. i. 19. Noah and his Sons have a larger Charter—Every moving Thing that liveth shall be Meat for you, even as the green Herb have I given you all Things, Gen. ix. 3. The Bleffing upon the Earth at the Creation was, Let the Earth bring forth Grass and Herb yielding Seed, and the Fruit Tree yielding Fruit after his Kind, whose Seed is in itself upon the Earth, Gen. i. 11. The Bleffing after the Flood is, While the Earth remaineth, Seed-

Seed-time and Harvest shall not cease, Gen. viii. 22. In the Beginning, The Lights in the Firmament were appointed to divide the Day from the Night, and to be --- for Seasons, and for Days and Years, Gen. i. 14. After the Flood the new Bleffing is, that Cold and Heat, and Summer and Winter, and Day and Night shall not cease, Gen. viii. 22. Tell me now what is there bestowed in the first Bleslings, that is wanting in the fecond? What more did Adam enjoy in his happiest Days, what more did he forfeit in his worst, with respect to this Life, than what is contained in these Bleffings? If he neither had more, nor loft more, all these Bleffings you see expresly restored to Noah and his Posterity; and can you still believe that the Curse upon the Earth remains? a to simil at a daidor ods

All this laid together amounts, I think, to this; that the old Curse upon the Ground was finished and compleated at the Deluge. And when the whole Race of Men, eight only excepted, were destroyed, the Serpent had sufficiently bruised the Heel of the Woman's Seed; and the Time was come to relieve the World with respect to this Part of the Curse so fully executed: Accordingly a Blessing is once more pronounced on the Earth;

Earth; and a Covenant of temporal Prosperity confirmed to Noab, and by him to all Mankind, making good the Prophecy of his Father at the Time of his Birth, This same

Shall comfort us, &cc.

You may think, perhaps, that we see but little Effect of this new Blessing; that the Life of Man is still Labour and Toil; that he still eats the Bread of Sorrow and Carefulness in the Sweat of his Brow; and that the Earth still abounds in Thorns and Thistles. Such Complaints as these are but the Effect of Prejudice: Men speak in this Case as if they thought there were no Thorns and Thistles till after the Fall, but that they were created on purpose to be a Curse; for if there were such Things (as undoubtedly there were before the Fall) why should you expect to have them removed by the Restoration of the Earth?

For what Employment do you imagine Man was made? For a little Sleep, a little Slumber, and a little folding of the Hands to fleep? Surely this was not the Case: Even in Paradise it was Adam's Business to dress and to keep the Garden. How much Labour this required we cannot tell; some it required, without doubt. After the Fall, Labour bour

bour increased and multiplied, and continued to be very burdensome unto the Time of the Flood: And God's Promise of regular Seafons after the Flood, seems to intimate that they were very irregular and confused before: Which one Circumstance will account for all the Change we suppose. What the Case was in the old World during the Curse, may probably be collected from the Curse denounced against Ifrael when disobedient : I will break the Pride of their Power; and I will make your Heaven as Iron, and your Earth as Brass, and your Strength shall be spent in vain: For your Land shall not yield ber Increase, neither shall the Trees of the Land yield their Fruits, Levit. xxvi. 10, 20.

There are serious Writers who think that the Earth was very much damaged and rendered less fertile by the Flood: But is it not obvious to observe, that this Judgment ought to be grounded on the Knowledge not only of the present State of the Earth, but also of the State before the Flood? For whoever compares two Things together, and judges upon the Comparison, must be supposed to know them both; and yet it is certain that we know nothing of the antediluvian State but this only, that it was a very bad one;

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which is not enough to support us in judging, that the present State is a much worse.

We meet with frequent Allusions to this Covenant with Noah in later Times, and later Books of Scripture: The Son of Sirach tells us, That an everlasting Covenant was made with him, xliv. 18. diadinas ai aivos, (Gr.) Testamenta Seculi, (Vulg.) The Covenant of the Age was given him: For Noah was the Father of the Age, and had the Covenant of the Age after the Flood, in like Manner as Christ was the Father, and brought in the

new Covenant of the succeeding Age.

The Prophet Jeremiab introduces God appealing to his own Fidelity in the Execution of this first Covenant, as a Reason why he ought to be trusted and relied on for the Performance of the second. If you can break my Covenant of the Day, and my Covenant of the Night, --- then may also my Covenant be broken with David my Servant, that be should not have a Son to reign upon his Throne, xxxiii. 20, 21. and ver. 25. In like manner the Prophet Isaiah, This is as the Waters of Noah unto me: For as I have sworn that the Waters of Noah should no more go over the Earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee, liv. 9. The lxvth Pfalm

Pfalm feems to be a Comment upon God's Covenant with Noah: Thou makest the Outgoings of the Morning and Evening to rejoice. Thou visitest the Earth, and waterest it:--Thou crownest the Year with thy Goodness, and thy Paths drop Fatness .-- The Pastures are cloathed with Flocks; the Vallies also are covered with Corn; they shout forth Joy, they also fing. It seems also to be with Reference to this Covenant that the Pfalmist appeals to God's Faithfulness in the Clouds, to his Mercy established in the Heavens, and to the Moon the Faithful Witness in Heaven. Wisdom, and Power and Goodness are shewn forth in the Creation, but Mercy and Faithfulne s relate to God's Dealings with Men; and when we hear of his Faithfulness in the Clouds, it naturally leads us to think of his Promife for Seed-time and Harvest, for the former and the latter Rain; Things evidently depending upon the Government of the Clouds.

During the Age of this Covenant, the Character by which God was known, and applied to, was relative to this Covenant, and the Bleffings of it; — Unto God would I commit my Cause, which doth great Things and unfearchable; marvellous Things without Number; who giveth Rain upon the Earth,

and

and sendeth Waters upon the Fields, Job v. 8, 9, 10. Sing Praises upon the Harp unto our God, who covereth the Heaven with Clouds, who prepareth Rain for the Earth, who maketh Grass to grow upon the Mountains. He giveth to the Beaft his Food, and to the young Ravens which cry, Pfalm cxlvii. 7, 8, 9. - Let us now fear the Lord our God that giveth Rain, both the former and the latter in bis Season: He reserveth unto us the appointed Weeks of the Harvest, Jer. v. 24. To the same Purpose, and with respect to the fame Times, the Apostles Paul and Barnabas tell the People at Lystra, That God in Times past suffered all Nations to walk in their own Ways, nevertheless be left not himself without Witness, in that he did Good, and gave us Rain and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness, Acts xiv. 17. Our bleffed Saviour does likewise commend and extol the Mercy of God in the Works of this first Covenant: He maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust. Which Words are directly a Comment upon the Terms of Noah's Covenant for fruitful Seafons, which were to continue without being interrupted again for the Sake of Man's Iniquity; H

quity; or, as the Text itself expresses it, Tha the Imagination of Man's Heart is evil from bis Youth, Gen. viii. 21. With respect to this Covenant of temporal Bleffings given to Noab, and to the Second Covenant of future Glory given to Christ, must St. Paul be understood to speak, when he says, Godliness is profitable to all Things, baving Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come. In any other View the Words are capable of no Exposition consistent with Experience; or with the Admonitions of the Gospel, which warn the Righteous to expect Sufferings in this World: But true it is, that for Godliness-sake the Promise of the Life that now is was confirmed with Noah; and for the same Reason was the Covenant of better Hopes confirmed with Christ.

These Allusions, and many more, suppose a Restoration of the Earth after the Flood, and a new Blessing given to it in virtue of God's Covenant; and without this Supposition I know not how to account for some Passages in Scripture, which speak of the Goodness of the Earth, and the great Plenty it affords. How comes it to pass that this very Earth, cursed with Barrenness, and to be a Nursery for Thorns and Thistles, is after-

wards

wards represented as flowing with Milk and Honey, abounding with Oil and Wine, and every thing useful and pleasant in Life? Can you imagine this Land of Plenty to be Part of the cursed Earth, doomed to bear Thorns and Thistles, and to weary out its Inhabitants with Toil and Labour? Yet this is the Case, if no Alteration has happened; and it will be no easy Work to reconcile these Contradictions. But if the Curse upon the Earth was expiated at the Flood; if the Earth has been once more blessed by its Creator, there wants no Art or Invention to solve this Dissipution. The Thing speaks for itself.

I will leave this Point upon these Reasons: Whether they are sufficient to establish an Opinion so contrary to the Prejudices of Mankind, I know not; they seem to me at least

to be worth confidering.

Let us consider now the State of Prophecy after the Flood, and upon what Foot the Religion of the new World subsisted.

I find no new Prophecy given to Noah after the Flood, nor to any of his Children till the Call of Abraham. The Reason of it seems to be this; the Power and Sovereignty of God were so manifestly displayed in the Deluge, and made so strong Impressions upon H 2

the few Persons then alive, and came so well attested to the succeeding Generation, that Religion wanted no other Support: When Idolatry prevailed, and the World was in danger of being quite lost to true Religion, without the Interposition of God, the Word of Prophecy was renewed; as we shall find when we come to that Period.

It may feem furprizing, perhaps, that after so great a Revolution in the World as the Deluge made, God should say nothing to the Remnant of Mankind of the Punishments and Rewards of another Life, but should make a new Covenant with them relating merely to fruitful Seasons, and the Bleffings of the Earth. All that I can fay to this Difficulty, is this; I think I fee plainly a gradual working of Providence towards the Redemption of the World from the Curse of the Fall; that the temporal Bleffings were first restored as an Earnest and Pledge of better Things to follow; that the Covenant of the Age given to Noah had, strictly speaking, nothing to do with the Hopes of Futurity, which were reserved to be the Matter of another Covenant in another Age, and to be reyealed by him, whose Province it was to bring Life and Immortality to Light thro' the Gospel. The

The Law of Moses, tho' a divine Revelation, and introduced to ferve and advance the great Ends of Providence with respect to Mankind, yet being given in the Age of the first Covenant, was in all Things made conformable to it; and was founded in no other express Promises than those of temporal Happiness and Prosperity, in no other express Threatning than those of temporal Loss and Misery. Abraham's temporal Covenant was the fame in kind with Noah's, tho' much enlarged and re-established upon further Promises and Assurances: As the Curse upon the Ground for the Wickedness of Cain, was of the very same kind with the Curse of the Fall; differing from it not in Kind, but in Degree.

But tho' the first Covenant, given to Noah, and the Law of Moses, sounded upon the Terms of that Covenant, contain no express Promises of suture Rewards, yet is it not to be imagined that all who lived under this Covenant were void of such Hopes and Expectations. If there were any such Hopes before the Flood, grounded upon the Prophecy consequent to the Fall, the Coming in of the Flood could not destroy them; and the Covenant of temporal Blessings given to

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Noab,

Noah, was so far from superseding better Hopes, that it did mightily strengthen and confirm them. For if Noah and his Forefathers expected Deliverance from the whole Curse of the Fall, the actual Deliverance from one Part of it was a very good Pledge of a further Deliverance to be expected in due Time. Man himself was cursed as well as the Ground, he was doomed to return to Dust; and fruitful Seasons are but a small Relief, compared to the Greatness of his Loss; but when fruitful Seasons came, and one Part of the Curse was evidently abated, it gave great Assurance that the other should not last for ever.

That Noah had such Expectations himself and transmitted them to his Posterity, seems evident from the peculiar Blessing which he bestowed on Shem. Blessed, says he, be the Lord God of Shem: Canaan shall be his Servant, God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the Tents of Shem, Gen. ix. 26, 27. Why the God of Shem, and not the God of Japhet? As to the Behaviour of these two Sons towards their Father, it was the same; they joined in the pious Office done to him; in this respect then they were equal, and equally deserving of a Blessing; if any Preserence

was due to either from the Father, it was to Taphet his First-bern; for so he was, tho' commonly last named when the Sons of Noah are mentioned together. This being the Case, how comes Shem to be preferred? And what is the Bleffing conveyed to him? The temporal Covenant it could not be, for that was before confirmed with all the Sons of Noab. Day and Night, Summer and Winter, Seed-time and Harvest, were a common Gift to the World, bestowed, as our blessed Lord observes, on the Evil as well as on the The Bleffing therefore peculiar to Good. Shem, was no Part of the temporal Covenant; nor was it any thing in the Power of his Father to bestow; for then his elder Brother, equally obedient and respectful to his Father, must have been served before him. Of what other Bleffing Noah had any Notion, can never be imagined, unless we seek for it among the Hopes he conceived of further Deliverance from the Curfe, grounded upon the divine Promise that the Seed of the Woman should finally prevail; the Right to which Promise was conveyed to him before the Flood, With thee will I establish my Covenant, Gen. vi. 18. For Noah had not only the temporal Covenant given to him and his Sons,

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Sons, but he was also, as the Apostle to the Hebrews tells us, Heir of the Righteousness which is by Faith, chap. xi. 7. If this be the Case, then Noah's Bleffing is like unto Lamech's Prophecy; for as Lamech foresaw that Noah should receive from God the Covenant of the Earth's Restoration; so Noah foresaw. that the greater Bleffing still behind, even the Covenant that should restore Man to himself and to his Maker, should be conveyed thro' the Posterity of Shem. This accounts for the Preference given to Shem; for Noah spoke not his own Choice, but declared the Counsel of God, who had now, as he frequently did afterwards, chosen the Younger before the Elder.



DISCOURSE

# THE TRUE SECTION OF THE SECTION OF T DISCOURSE V.



O what Purposes the antient Prophecies were given, and upon what Foot Religion flood from the Beginning to the Restoration,

or new Establishment of the World, in Noab and his Posterity, has been already considered. We are now advancing to Times of greater Light, to clearer and more distinct Prophecies, and more nearly relating to God's great Dispensation of Mercy and Goodness towards Mankind, manifested by the Revelation of his Son. This Period begins at the Call of Abraham, and runs thro' the Law and the Prophets, ending where the Gospel of Christ Jesus commences. It contains such a Variety and Number of Prophecies, that I cannot propose to myself so large and extensive a Subject to be the Matter of short Discourses from this Place. But it may perhaps be of fome Use to inquisitive Minds, to suggest to them the great and general Defign of Providence

dence in the Prophecies of this Period; to shew them the State of Religion during this Season; and how well the Light of Prophecy afforded to this Generation correfponded to the State and Necessity of the Times. If in this Method of enquiring we can arrive at the Knowledge of God's Defign in giving the Word of Prophecy to the old World, we shall the more easily discern of what Use these antient Oracles are to the present World; and how far the Truth of the Gospel, which we believe and profess, depends upon the Authority and Evidence of antient Prophecy. In order to this Enquiry, it is necessary, first, to consider the State of true Religion, and the Supports it had during this Period; for Prophecy being relative to the State of Religion in the World, we must know the one to understand the other.

How foon the World after the Deluge corrupted their Ways, and lost the Knowledge of the True God, and changed the Glory of the incorruptible—into an Image made like to corruptible Man, we cannot certainly know; but this we certainly know, that in Abraham's Time Idolatry had spread far and wide; and taken deep Root even in the Family of Shem, and in that Branch of

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it particularly from which Abraham descended. This being the Case, it is highly probable that true Religion had entirely failed in the World, had not God visibly interposed to preserve such a Sense of it, as was necessary for the Accomplishment of his

great Defign to restore Mankind.

Necessary I say to this End; for most evident it is. That it was not the Intention of Providence in the Call of Abraham, or in giving the Law of Moses, to propagate or restore true Religion among all Nations of the old World; fo far from it, that the Covenant with Abrabam is founded upon the Condition not of reforming, but of destroying the idolatrous Nations in the Land of Canaan: and the Sign of Circumcifing was given to separate Abraham and his Posterity from the rest of Mankind; which shews that the rest of Mankind were not called to that Covenant, of which Circumcifion was the Sign or Sacrament. Moreover the Law of Moles was established in such Rites and Ceremonies, and many of them to be performed only in the Land of Canaan, that there is no room to suppose that it was ever intended to be a general Law for Mankind. Add to this what Paul and Barnabas tell the People at Lyfra, That

That God in Times past suffered all Nations to walk in their own Ways, Acts xiv. 16. And what St. Paul says to the People of Athens, God winked at the Times of Ignorance; but now commandeth all Men every where to repent, Acts xvii. 30. And it will be most evident, that the Call of Abraham, and the Law of Moses consequent to it, were not intended as general Calls to Mankind, but were sufferient to some other View and Design of Providence.

If we consider now the whole World lost to all Sense of Religion, estranged from God, and void of all Hopes towards him; and suppose one Family chosen out merely for their own sakes to be delivered from the general Corruption and Misery, without any View or Design towards the general Good of Mankind, it gives so mean, so partial a View of God, that I think no Religion can consist with such a Notion.

But if the Law of Moses was neither intended to be a general Law for Mankind, nor yet intended as a partial Favour and Benefit to the Jews only, exclusive of all Mankind, what remains, but that we must confider it, as a Method of Providence working towards the great End always in View, the general

general Restoration of Mankind from the Curse of the Fall? As the opening of that Scene which was to bring a Bleffing upon all Nations of the Earth? Accordingly we find this to be the Case; when Abraham was called and received the Promises, he had Affurance given him not only of peculiar Bleffings to himself and Posterity, but likewise of a general Bleffing to be conveyed through him to all Mankind: " I will make of thee, fays God, " a great Nation, and I will blefs " thee, and make thy Name great, and thou " Shalt be a Bleffing. And I will blefs them " that bless thee, and curse him that cursetb " thee :" Immediately it follows, " And in " thee shall all Families of the Earth be blef-" fed," Gen. xii. 2. 'Tis of great Importance in the present Question, to distinguish rightly these Promises.

The Promise of temporal Prosperity to Abraham and his Posterity is sufficiently explained in the Course of his Story: At the seventh Verse of this Chapter, God tells him he would give to his Seed the Land of Canaan: And in Chap. xv. 18. that he would give the Land unto his Seed, "from the River of Egypt" unto the great River, the River Euphrates:" In the seventeenth Chapter, that "he would "multiply

" multiply him exceedingly; that he should be " a Father of many Nations, and Kings should " come out of him." These were great Promiles and great Inducements to Obedience; but, except the particular Gift of the Land of Canaan (and there were probably other Parts of the World as good as that) there was nothing in them peculiar to Abraham and his Posterity only. There were before Abraham's Time, and have been fince, many great and powerful Nations of another Kindred; the Sons of Ham and Japhet, and those descended by other Branches from Shem, have arrived to great Prosperity, and left a numerous Iffue behind them, in vertue of the common Bleffing bestowed on their Ancestors after the Flood, to whom God faid, " Be " ye fruitful and multiply, and bring forth " abundantly in the Earth, and multiply " therein;" to them likewise he gave the Promife of fruitful Seasons, and sustained them with Corn and with Wine. Thus far then the Promise to Abraham was derived from the temporal Covenant established with Noah and his Sons after the Flood, in which other Nations and People had a Share as well as himself; and some of them in some Respects a much greater, as he must needs judge,

#### DISCOURSE V. III

judge, who knows any thing of the antient or present Empires of the East and West. But if we look forward, we shall see the Distinction between the feveral Promises grow plain, when God renews the Covenant, and limits the peculiar Blessing of Abraham to the Son which should be born of Sarab his Wife. In the xviith of Genesis the Lord appears to Abraham, and fays, " I am the Almighty God, " walk before me, and be thou perfect;" then follows, " I will make my Covenant between " me and thee, and I will multiply thee exceed-" ingly - and thou shalt be a Father of " many Nations." At the 7th and 8th Verses God promises to establish an everlasting Covenant with him and his Seed after him, to give him and them all the Land of Canaan for an everlasting Possession, and to be their God. Here are either two Covenants, mentioned together in the Compass of a few Lines, or else the same Covenant repeated, with this Difference, that in the last place it is styled an everlasting Covenant, and the Land of Canaan is affigned for an everlasting Possession; with this remarkable Addition, that God promises to be the God of Abraham and of his Seed after him. And this is the first time that this peculiar Character assumed by God.

God, of being the God of Abraham, and of his Seed, occurs in Scripture; and it is evidently connected to the Promise of the everlasting Covenant. Which Connexion feems to be the true Foundation of our Saviour's Argument from this Expression, to prove the Refurrection of the Dead; as the Connexion of the Promise of the Land of Canaan to the everlasting Covenant, seems to be the Reason of treating the Land of Canaan as a Type or Sign of Heaven. This Character of God, thus connected to the everlasting Covenant, is likewise a plain Intimation, that two distinct Covenants are mentioned in this Place, and not the same repeated again. Towards the Close of this Chapter, Abraham receives an express Promise that he should have a Son by Sarah his Wife, within the Compass of a Year, and that the everlasting Covenant should be established with this Son, and his Seed after him. - Abraham had at this Time a Son of thirteen Years old, born of Hagar the Egyptian; to whom the Angel of the Lord had appeared when she was with Child of this Son, and promised to multiply her Seed exceedingly, that it should not be numbered for Multitude, Gen. xvi. 10. This Promise therefore of a numerous Posterity slourishing in the

the Earth, tho' Part of the Promise given to Abraham, as we have feen before, is no Part of the everlafting Covenant, confirmed to Isaac, exclusively to all the natural Sons of Abraham. This appears likewise from the very Paffage where this Promife is limited to Isaac: Abraham, when he received the Promife of a Son by his Wife, puts up a Petition, whatever the Occasion of it was, for his Son Ishmael; "O that Ishmael might live " before thee." To which he receives this Answer; " As for Ishmael, I have beard thee: " Behold I have bleffed him, and will make " bim fruitful, and will multiply bim exceed-" ingly: Twelve Princes shall be beget, and I " will make him a great Nation:" Immediately it follows, "But my Covenant will I " establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear " unto thee." Can any thing be plainer to shew that the everlasting Covenant, to be established with Isaac and his Seed, was of a very different kind from the Covenant given to Ishmael, of multiplying his Seed, of making him Father of Kings and Princes, and of raising him into a great Nation? And yet this very Covenant was given originally to Abraham; he was to have a numerous Posterity, to be Father of Kings, and of a great

great Nation. Ishmael was admitted to the Benefit of this Covenant as well as Isaac, and yet expresly excluded from that which God emphatically styles MY Covenant, and the everlasting Covenant; an undeniable Evidence that God's Covenant with Abraham was founded on better Hopes than those of mere temporal Prosperity. This Distinction of two Covenants in the Case of Ishmael and Isaac, made by God himself, is the Foundation of St. Paul's Argument to the Galatians: "It " is written, fays he, that Abraham had two " Sons, the one by a bond Maid, the other by a " free Woman: But he who was of the bond " Woman was born after the Flesh; but he of " the free Woman was by Promise: Which " Things are an Allegory; for these are the " two Covenants:" And whoever is capable of confidering what is related concerning this Matter in the Book of Genefis, will evidently see that these are indeed two Covenants; and two fuch Covenants as fully juftify the Apostle's Reasoning upon this Point. Since then the Promises of temporal Pro-

Since then the Promises of temporal Prosperity, made to Abraham and his Seed after him, are evidently distinct from the Subject Matter of the everlasting Covenant, made with him, and limited to Isaac and Jacob,

and

and afterwards to the Tribe of Judah, and lastly to the Family of David; it remains to be confidered, what the Subject of the Covenant so limited is. If we look back to the Call of Abraham, and the Promises which attend it, there we shall find, that after enumerating the temporal Bleffings, which were to descend from Abraham to his Posterity, one Bleffing is added, in which all the World has an Interest, and which was to be conveyed to them thro' Abraham and his Seed; " In thee, fays God, shall all the Fa-" milies of the Earth be bleffed." Whatever Abrabam understood by this, I think verily he could not understand it as his Children at this Day understand it, who expect, in virtue of the Promises made to the Fathers, to be Lords of the World, and to have Dominion over all People: A strange Blessing this to all Nations, that they should fall from their natural Liberty, and become subject to the Dominion of one People! None but a Jew can see the Happiness of fuch a State; the Nations of the Earth, if left to their Choice, would all refuse this great Bleffing for themselves. But before we enquire into the special Meaning of this Bleffing upon all Nations, we must see whether

ther this univerfal Bleffing, to be revealed in due Time, were truly the Matter of God's special, his everlasting Covenant with Abrabam. We have feen already that Ishmael was excluded from this special Covenant, and Isaac admitted to it; we have the Covenant of God with Ishmael, and the Covenant of God as renewed with Isaac, both preserved in the Book of Genefis; and it is observed that the two Covenants, as to worldly Prosperity, are nearly the same: but they differ in this, the Covenant with Ishmael says nothing of the Bleffing to all Nations; the Covenant with Isaac expresly renews this very Promise: In thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be bleffed, Gen. xxvi. 4. A plain Proof, furely, that the special Matter of God's Covenant, limited from Abraham to Isaac exclusive of Ishmael, confisted in the Promise of this univerfal Bleffing, to be conveyed through Abraham and Isaac and their Posterity to all Mankind.

We have the like Evidence from a like Case, which happened between the Children of Isaac; with this only Difference, that Ishmael and Isaac were born, one of a bond Woman, the other of a free; but Esau and Jacob were Twins of one Birth, both born of

a free

a free Woman. The Bleffing of Abraham was limited to Jacob, and denied to Esau: Yet Esau received a temporal Bleffing from his Father, as well as Jacob. The Apostle to the Hebrews accounts it Profaneness in Elau that he fold his Birthright; it must be because he sold the Blessing of Abraham, and the Promises of God; upon any other Account there is no room for his Charge, for it was never reckoned Profaneness to fell mere temporal Rights; nor was Esau excluded from the Benefit of the temporal Promifes by this scandalous Bargain. If Jacob was bleffed with the Dew of Heaven, and the Fatness of the Earth, and Plenty of Corn and Wine, Gen. xxvii. 28. Esau's Bleffing in this respect was not inferior; Thy Dwelling, says his Father, shall be the Fatness of the Earth, and of the Dew of Heaven from above, ver. 39. If Nations were to bow down to Jacob, ver. 29. Esau likewise was to live and prevail by bis Sword, ver. 40. If Jacob's Brethren were to bow down to him, ver. 29. yet the Time would come when Esau should have Dominion, and break even this Yoke from off his Neck, ver. 40. Thus the Case stands between them, if we interpret the whole Bleffing given to 7acob of temporal Prosperity and Dominion;

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but there is great Reason to limit Part of it to the peculiar Bleffing of Abraham and Isaac, which was undoubtedly conveyed at this Time to Jacob. The conveying the Birthright in the Family of Abraham, was conveying the special Bleffing of Abraham, which always attended upon the Birthright. This Birthright was evidently made over to Jacob, when it was faid, Be Lord over thy Brethren. The special Bleffing was in Time to be extended to all Nations, as well as to the House of Abraham, for in his Seed all the Families of the Earth were to be bleffed; and therefore in consequence of the Birthright it is said to Jacob,—Let People serve thee, and Nations bow down to thee, ver. 29. It is very evident from the whole Story of Isaac's Bleffing his two Sons, that the chief Blessing he had to bestow fell upon Jacob; and it is as plain that there are no Words to limit this particular Bleffing to Jacob, but these now under Confideration; and Isaac himself understood that he had passed away the Blessing of Abraham to Jacob in these Words, and therefore he tells Esau that the Bleffing was gone beyond Recovery, I have bleffed him, yea, and he shall be blessed, ver. 33. But Esau pressed his Father for a Bleffing on himself: Maac

Isaac answered and said - Behold I have made him thy Lord, and all his Brethren have I given to him for Servants; and with Corn and Wine have I sustained him: And what shall I do now unto thee, my Son? ver. 37. Esau still urges his Father; Bless me, even me also, O my Father. Upon this Isaac bleffes him; and pray observe; of Corn and Wine and temporal Power he gives him a full and an equal Share: - Thy Dwelling shall be the Fatness of the Earth, and of the Dew of Heaven from above: The only Limitation on the Bleffing is, Thou Shalt Serve thy Brother. Whatever then was peculiarly given to Jacob, was contained in the Grant, of being Lordover bis Brethren; and what this peculiar Gift was, we may learn from Isaac himself, who in the next Chapter renews the Bleffing on Jacob, and gives expresly to him and his Seed, the Bleffing of Abraham, ver. 4. In the fame Chapter the Bleffing is renewed and confirmed by God himself; In thee and in thy Seed shall all the Families of the Earth be blessed, ver. 14.

That the Regard of all Nations to the Seed in which they were all to be bleffed, should be expressed by their bowing down to bim, is no hard Figure of Speech; that even

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this Yoke, this Superiority of Abraham's Family, should one Day be broken, as the Promise to Esau sets forth, when Jews and Gentiles should be on an equal Foot, and equally the People of God, is no more than the original Covenant contains; for the Day was to come when all Nations should be equally blessed.

If you expound this Bleffing of temporal Dominion, see how the Case will stand: Jacob is to rule over Efau; yet no sooner is the Bleffing given, but he flies his Country for fear of Esau, Gen. xxvii. 43, &c. He lives abroad for many Years; and when he returns. the Fear and Dread of his Brother returns with him: He was greatly afraid and diftressed, Gen. xxxii. 7. His only Refuge in this Distress was to God; Deliver me, I pray thee, from the Hand of my Brother, from the Hand of Esau, ver. 11. When he fends a Message to him, he styles himself, Thy Servant facob, ver. 20. When he met him, be bowed himself to the Ground seven Times, until he came near to Esau, xxxiii. 3. When he speaks to him, he calls him Lord; when he was kindly received by Esau, he says, I have feen thy Face, as the I had feen the Face of God, and thou wast pleased with me, ver. 10. What is there in all this to shew the Rule and

and Dominion that was given to Jacob over his Mother's Sons?

If you suppose the Prophecy understood of temporal Dominion, to be fulfilled in the Posterity of these two Brothers, let us see how the Case stands upon this Supposition: The Family of Esau was settled in Power and Dominion many Years before Jacob's Family had any certain Dwelling-place; the Dukes and Kings of Efau's House are reckoned up, Gen. xxxvi. and the Historian tells us, These are the Kings that reigned in the Land of Edom, before there reigned any King over the Children of Ifrael, ver. 31. When the appointed Time was come for establishing the House of Israel, and giving them the Land and Possessions of their Enemies, the Family of Esau were by a particular Decree. exempted from the Dominion of Ifrael: The Lord spake unto Moses, - Command thou the People, saying, Ye are to pass thro' the Coast of your Brethren the Children of Efau, which dwell in Seir, and they shall be afraid of you: Take ye good beed unto yourselves therefore, meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their Land, no not so much as a Foot breadth, because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a Possession, Deut. ii. 4, 5. If in the Time

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of David, they of Edom became his Servants, 2 Sam. viii. 14. yet in the Days of Jeboram did they recover again, and made a King over themselves, 2 Kings viii. 20. And in the Time of Abaz they revenged the Affront, by smiting Judah, and leading away Captives, 2Chron. xxviii. 17. Can you now suppose that this Variety of Fortune between the Children of Jacob and Esau was the thing intended, or meant to be described, when the Promise was given to Jacob, that bis Mother's Children should bow down to bim? If this were the Case, Isaac needed not to be so scrupulous in preserving the peculiar Bleffing to Jacob; he might have given Esau a Share of it, and the Event would have answered.

It appears, I think, from hence, that the Blessing given to Jacob, and expressed in Words implying a Rule over his Brethren, was truly a Conveyance of the Birthright to him in the Family of Abraham; that the Birthright in Abraham's Family respected the special Blessing and Covenant given to Abraham by God; that Isaac himself calls this Right of Primogeniture in his House, the Blessing of Abraham; that God himself, in Consirmation of Jacob's Right of Primogeniture, assured in his Seed all the Families of the Earth shall be blessed. Now

Now this Promise being the only special Promise made to Isaac and Jacob in Preserence to their Brethren, and in consequence of God's everlafting Covenant limited to them, this Promife must necessarily be understood to be the Subject-Matter of the everlasting Covenant: And it is very observable, that this Bleffing fo peculiarly belongs to this Covenant, that it is never mentioned with respect to any other Person whatever, than fuch only, to whom the Right of this Covenant, and the Promise of the Land of Canaan descended. Some Interpreters have imagined that these Words require no higher a Sense than this, that all Nations should see the Prosperity of Abraham and his Seed so evidently, that they should bless themselves and others in some such Form as this; God make thee as great as Abraham, and his Seed. But can we imagine that God's everlasting Covenant, as he himself calls it, was given only to produce a proverbial Form of Speech in the World? That the Prerogative of Isaac above Ishmael, of Jacob above Esau, lay in this only, that the Nations should use the Name of one in their mutual good Wishes, and not of the other? Besides, when was this ever the Case, when did all Nations thus bless

bless themselves, or when was there Occasion for it? The Posterity of Ishmael was established in Power much sooner, and were as great and successful for many Ages as the Jews, and much larger Empires have sprung from them: So that there was hardly ever any Ground to take up this proverbial Speech, which some make to be the Whole of this special Covenant limited from Abraham to

Isaac and Facob.

What distinct Notion Abraham had of the Bleffing promifed to all Nations thro' him and his Seed, what he thought of the Manner and Method by which it should be effected, we cannot pretend to fay. But that he understood it to be a Promise of restoring Mankind, and delivering them from the remaining Curse of the Fall, there can be little doubt. He knew that Death had entered by Sin; he knew that God had promised Victory and Redemption to the Seed of the Woman: Upon the Hopes of this Restoration the Religion of his Ancestors was founded; and when God, from whom this Bleffing on all Men was expected, did expressy promise a Bleffing on all Men, and in this Promise founded his everlafting Covenant, what could Abraham else expect but the Completion in his

his Seed of that antient Promife and Prophecy, concerning the Victory to be obtained by the Woman's Seed? The Curse of the Ground was expiated by the Flood, and the Earth reftored with a Bleffing, which was the Foundation of the temporal Covenant with Noab; a large Share of which God expresly grants to Abraham, and his Posterity particularly, together with a Promife, by their Means, to bring a new and further Bleffing upon the whole Race of Men. Lay these Things together, and say what less could be expected from the new Promife or Prophecy given to Abraham, than a Deliverance from that Part of the Curse still remaining on Man, Dust thou art, and to Dust thou shalt return? In virtue of this Covenant, Abraham and his Posterity had Reason to expect that the Time would come when Man should be called from his Dust again: For this Expectation they had his Affurance who gave the Covenant, That he would be their God for ever. Well might our Saviour then tell the Sons of Abraham, that even Moses at the Bush shewed the Resurrection of the Dead, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Ijaac, and the God of Jacob.

To preserve these Hopes in the World, upon

upon which the Restoration of the World to Life and Immortality depended, was Abrabam called from his own Country and Kindred, then tainted with Idolatry, to be a Witness to God and his Truth. Had he, with all the rest of Mankind, been suffered to continue in Idolatry, the Knowledge of God had been loft, and the Remembrance of his Providence in creating Man at first, of the Hopes given of a fecond and better Creation after the Fall, had utterly perished. Abraham was not called merely for his own Sake, much less were his Posterity, a stubborn and stiffnecked People, preserved for their own Sakes; but he was called, and they preserved, to be Instruments in the Hands of God, for fulfilling the Purposes of his Mercy, in the Restoration and Redemption of the World. The great Article of the Covenant, limited to Abraham and his chosen Seed, most evidently regarded the whole Race of Man, and was to grow, in the Fulness of Time, into a Bleffing upon all the Nations of the Earth: He and his Posterity were Depositories of these Hopes, or, to use the Words of St. Paul, this was the Yews chief Advantage above others, " That unto them were committed the " Oracles of God."

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This Account will help us to a distinct View of the Prophecies relating to this Period of Time of which we are speaking. As two Covenants were given to Abraham and his Seed, one a temporal Covenant, to take place, and to be performed in the Land of Canaan; the other a Covenant of better Hopes, and to be performed in a better Country; so are the Prophecies, given to Abraham and to his Children after him, of two Kinds; one relative to the temporal Covenant, and given in Discharge and Execution of God's temporal Promises; the other relative to the spiritual Covenant, given to confirm and establish the Hopes of Futurity, and to prepare and make ready the People for the Reception of the Kingdom of God.

Many of the antient Prophecies relate to both Covenants; and hence it comes to pass, that at the first Appearance many of the antient Predictions seem to be hardly consistent with themselves, but to be made up of Ideas, which can never unite in one Person, or in one Event. Thus the Promises to David of a Son, to succeed in his Throne, have some Circumstances, which are applicable only to Solomon, and the temporal Dominion over the House of Israel; some, which are pecu-

liar to that Son of David, who was Heir of an everlafting Kingdom, which was to be established on Truth and Righteousness. Hence it is, that we often find the Promises of temporal Felicity, and temporal Deliverance, raifed to high, that no temporal Felicity or temporal Deliverance can answer the Description; the Thoughts and Expressions of the Prophet naturally moving from the Bleffings of one Covenant, to the Bleffings of the other, and fometimes describing the inconceiveable Glories of one Covenant, by Expreffions and Similitudes borrowed from the more fensible Glories and Blessings of the other. The Prophet Isaiah, being sent to raise the drooping Spirits of Abaz and the House of David, threatened at that Time with immediate Ruin by two potent Enemies, could not but remember the double Promise of a Kingdom given to David, which was a double Security for the Establishment of his House; together therefore with the Affurances and the Signs given of temporal Deliverance, he intermixes the Affurance and the Sign of the greater Deliverance, before the Completion of which the House of David could not fail; for that House should continue till the Virgin conceived and brought forth Immanuel, that Son

Son of David, to whom the everlasting Kingdom was promised. Ought it to be Matter of Wonder, that the Prophets, who were Ministers of both Covenants, entrusted with the Counsel of God for the Direction of the temporal Affairs of the People of Ifrael, and commissioned to cherish the Hopes and Expectations of a better Kingdom, to be given in virtue of God's everlasting Covenant; ought it to be wondered at, I fay, that they often speak of both Kingdoms together, that they make use of the temporal Deliverances as an Argument to encourage the Hopes of the spiritual? When in truth the temporal Deliverances, being the actual Performance of one Covenant, were a great Security for the Performance of the other; and it was unnatural to fee the Hand of God performing one Promise, and not to reflect upon the Certainty of his performing the other.

The Bleffing belonging to the special Covenant, given to Abraham and his Seed, were reserved to be revealed in God's appointed Time. The Prophets under the Law could not be commissioned to declare these Bleffings openly and nakedly, without anticipating the Time of their Revelation. Hence it is that the Predictions concerning Christ and his King-

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dom are clothed in such Figures as were proper to raise the Hope and Attention of the People, without carrying them beyond the Bounds of Knowledge prescribed by God

to the Age of the Yewish Covenant.

If we confider each kind of Prophecy distinctly by itself, we shall the better discern how this Case stands. To begin then with those relating to the temporal Covenant; Abraham was called from his Father's House. upon a Promise that he should become a great Nation, and that his Seed should possess the Land of Canaan. This Promise could not be fulfilled in all its Parts, till Abraham's Family was multiplied into a Nation. This required many Years; and what must become of these Children of Promise in the mean time? They had no Country of their own; where then should they fettle and multiply? I will not launch out into Speculation upon the Methods of Providence, by which the People of Ifrael were raifed and preserved; but let any one read the Prophecies from the Call of Abraham to Mofes, he will evidently fee that they refer to this State of Things: To arm the Faith of Abraham and his Posterity, against the Fears of Disappointments, under the necessary Delays, and fome

some evil Treatments they were to undergo, God acquaints Abraham with his Purpose, and tells him, his Seed should be four bundred Years in a strange Land. This Circumstance, had it not been foretold, would, in all Probability, have blotted out the Memory of the Promise; four hundred Years of Distress are sufficient to cure any People of their great Expectations. But this Prophecy was a Warning and a Security in this respect. When the Time of Servitude drew near, and the People wanted more than ordinary Help to preserve their Trust in the Promise of God, Jacob, before his End, was enlightened, by the Spirit of Prophecy, to fet before the Twelve Tribes the Glory, and Honours, and Possessions, that should accrue to each in the happy Day of their Triumph : By the same Spirit, Joseph, on his Death-bed, affures them, That God would furely vifit them, and bring them into the Land which be fware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to facob. These were Cordials prepared against the Day of Distress, then near at hand.

The Times of Moses and of Joshua, those Days of Miracles as well as Prophecies, want no Explication: The Intention of Providence appears plain in every Step, and may be discerned by every Eye.

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The Commonwealth of Ifrael was raised, and flourished, under the temporal Covenant, given at first to Noah; and in a particular Manner, with additional Promifes, confirmed to Ahraham and his Seed: For this Reason all the Promises and Threatnings of the Law are temporal, suitable to the Age and Season of the World. But these temporal Bleffings and Punishments were so visibly administred by the Hand of God, that every Instance of the Execution of the Threats and Promifes of the Law became a new Proof of its divine Authority. If you enquire why God did so visibly interpose in the Government of this People, always guiding and directing them in the Conduct of temporal Affairs, and Matters of State, by the Voice of his Prophets, when all other Nations before, and fince, have been left under the general Rules of Providence to their own Conduct and Discretion; the Answer, I think, is this: No other Nation ever had a divine Law, given upon the Establishment of temporal Blesfings and Punishments; and therefore God had not so bound himself to any other Nation, to account to them for their temporal Prosperity and Adversity: But to the Jews, with whom he had established a Law and a Covenant upon temporal Promises, he stood obliged

obliged to make good his Word, and to justify himself to them in the Administration of temporal Affairs. For this Reason a Succession of Prophets was raised up among them, at whose Mouths they might receive the Direction of God; And this is what Moses means, when he says, "What Nation" is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto "them, as the Lord our God is in all Things" that we call upon him for? Deut. iv. 7.

Whenever it was necessary to punish the People for their Disobedience, that they might not be tempted by the Prosperity of other Nations, and their own Adversity, to fall away to other Gods, they were forewarned of the Things that were to befal them; their Calamities were prophetically described to them, that they might know, whenever they suffered, that it was the very Hand of God, of their own God, that was upon them: And this is the Reason of our finding fo many Prophecies, under the Law, relating to the Civil State and Condition of the Yews; for this Cause the great Captivity of Babylon is so largely and fully foretold by the Prophets, that the People might not be tempted to think that the Gods of the Nations had prevailed against them, and thereby

be seduced, as oftentimes they were seduced by this very Imagination, to forfake God in their Distress; but that they might know that the Almighty Hand of the Lord was in all their Sufferings, and might thereby become humble and obedient: and further, that they might know that all their Adverfity and Prosperity came on them, according to the express Terms of their Covenant with God, who bleffed them when obedient, and humbled them when obstinate. All Nations have had, and still have, their Turns of Prosperity and Adversity, and God thinks not himself obliged to account to them for the Measures of his Providence towards them: But the Case was otherwise with the Yewish Nation; for God having established a Covenant with them, upon temporal Promises and temporal Curses, the very Execution of the Covenant, on God's Part, required him to appear, and openly administer the Penalties and Promises of his Law; to procure the Happiness of the People when obedient, and to inflict the Punishment due to their Iniquity. Hence it is that he directs them in the Way of temporal Happiness by the Voice of the Prophets, and gives them open Warning of all Evils which he brings on them;

them; that they may fee him in every instance performing the Word of his Covenant. Every Prophecy from God spoke in the Language of Moses's Song, See now, that I, even I am be, and there is no God with me : I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I beal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my Hand.

This accounts for all he Prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the temporal State of the Jewish Nation; with which we have no further Concern, than only to give a reasonable Account of them; that the antient Prophets of God may not pass for mere Fortune-tellers, as they have been represented to the World of late.

The People of the Yews were so prone to follow the Customs of the Nations around them, and to fall away to Idolatry, that from their coming into Canaan, till the Times of the Babylonish Captivity, there was a perpetual Struggle between the Prophets of God, and the false Prophets of the Nations, which should prevail; with this View are many antient Prophecies given to preserve the People from being seduced by the Nations round them. We may learn this from the Reproof given to the Messengers of Abaziah, who

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had

had sent to enquire of Baalzebub the God of Ekron, whether he should recover of his Difease: Go, says the Angel of the Lord to " Elijah, Go meet the Messengers of the King " of Samaria, and fay unto them; Is it not " because there is not a God in Israel, that " ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the God of " Ekron? Now therefore thus faith the Lord, " Thou shalt not come down from that Bed on " which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die," 2 Kings i. 3, 4. To the very same Purpose God speaks in the Prophet Isaiah, rendering an Account of his ancient Prophecies-" I have declared the former Things from the " Beginning, and they went forth out of my " Mouth, and I shewed them, I did them sud-" denly, and they came to pass. Because I " knew that thou art obstinate, and thy Neck " is an Iron Sinew, and thy Brow Brass. I " have even from the Beginning declared it to " thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee; " lest thou shouldst say, Mine Idol bath done " them, and my graven Image, and my mol-" ten Image bath commanded them," Isaiah xlviii. 3, 4, 5.

You see now upon what Foot all the Prophecies in the Old Testament stand, which relate to the temporal Concerns of the Jew-

ish Nation; you see likewise the Reason why this kind of Prophecy has ceased in the Christian Church. The Gospel is not founded in temporal Promises; so far from it, that we are called upon to take up our Cross, and sollow Christ. The bringing in of better Hopes has vacated the Promises of the Mosaic Covenant; and it is expected of us, after so much Light given, that our Faith should be Proof against the Adversaries of the World, without the Help of a Prophet to foretel, or to reveal to us, in every Instance, the Counsel of God.

These Prophecies relating to the Things of this Life, concern us but little; they have had their Completion, long since, in Events which affect not us: But others there are relating to the great Depositum entrusted with the Jews, even the Hopes of Redemption, which were to be a Blessing to all the Nations of the Earth, in which we are highly concerned, and which will deserve our particular Consideration.

DISCOURSE

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## DISCOURSE VI.



HE Prophecies of the Old Testament, generally considered, relate either to the temporal State and Condition of the

Yews, and were, in order to the Administration and Execution, on God's Part, of the temporal Covenant, given to Abraham and his natural Descendents; or they relate to that great and universal Bleffing, promised to Abraham and to his Seed, though not limited to them, but expresly defigned and extended, in the Words of the original Covenant, to all the Nations of the World. these we have already considered the first Kind, and endeavoured to shew the Purport and Defign of Providence in the many Oracles reducible to this Head. It remains now, that we confider the Prophecies of the fecond Kind in the same Method; not enquiring into the express Meaning and Accomplishment

of every fingle Prophecy applicable to this Subject, but into the general Use and Design of these Prophecies; which being discovered, we shall be able, with better Success, to apply ourselves to the Examination of each di-The Prophecies of the feveral vine Oracle. Periods, already confidered, have been found to correspond to the State of Religion in the World, at the Time of giving the Prophecy; A great Presumption that the Case is the fame under the Jewish Dispensation. We must therefore, in order to our present Enquiry, consider the State of Religion under the Mosaic Dispensation, and examine how far, and to what Purposes, Prophecy was requisite, and whether in Fact these Purposes were ferved by the Prophecies under the Law.

As to the State of Religion under the Law of Moses, to save your Time and my own, I shall refer myself to the Books of the Law, in every Man's Hand. But two Questions there are, necessary to be considered at present; and First, The Promise to Abraham consisting of two distinct Parts, or including two distinct Covenants, the one, relating to the temporal State and Prosperity of his Seed in the Land of Canaan, the other, to the Bles-

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fing, which thro' him and his Seed, was to be conveyed to all Nations of the Earth: the Question is, to which of these two Covenants the Law of Moses is annexed. If the Law was given in Execution of the Promife made to all Nations, then have the Nations nothing further to expect; God has fulfilled his Word: The Jews are right in adhering to their Law; and we in the wrong in rejecting it: But if the Law of Moses is built upon the temporal Covenant only, and given properly to the Yews only, then both Yews and Gentiles have further Hopes, and a just Expectation remaining, to fee God's Promife to all Nations accomplished; which was not accomplished by the giving of the Law.

I have already, in the Course of this Argument, observed to you, that the Law of Moses was given to the Jews only, and not to all Nations: For which these Reasons,

among others, may be affigned:

First, The Obligation of no Law extends beyond the Terms of its Promulgation; now the Law of Moses was promulged to the Jews only; the Words are, Hear O Israel; whereas, had the Law been intended for all Nations, it ought to have been promulged to all, and the Words should have been.

been, Hear all Nations of the Earth: And thus the Christian Law is promulged; the Apostles had it expressly in Commission from Christ "To teach ALL NATIONS, bap-" tizing them in the Name of the Father, and "of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching "them to observe all Things what soever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you "ALWAY, even unto the END OF THE "WORLD:" A Commission, which plainly shews that the Gospel Dispensation extends to all Places, and all Times, even to the End of the World; and that no other new Law is to be expected.

Secondly, The Law of Moses relates to the temporal Covenant only, as being established expressy upon the Terms and Conditions of it. The Ten Commandments are founded upon this, that God brought them, the Jews, out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage: A Reason which extended to the People of the Jews only; for all other Nations were not brought out of the Land of Egypt, and the House of Bondage. The first Threatning is temporal, of visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation; the Promise is of the same Kind; both relative

to the temporal Covenant: as is likewise the Promise of the fifth Commandment, That thy Days may be long in the Land which the

Lord thy God giveth thee.

Thirdly, Many Rites and Performances of the Law were confined to the Land of Canaan, and the Temple of Jerufalem: for which Reason even the Jews, in their Disperfion, pretend not to observe the Law in these Points, and they would be Transgreffors of the Law, if they did. Now 'tis absurd, if the Law was intended for all People, that the main Performances of it should be confined within the Territories of one particular People only: And therefore, when the Chriftian Law was to take place, every Country was to be a proper Place of divine Worship: Which is the true Meaning of our Saviour's Words to the Woman of Samaria; Woman believe me, the Hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this Mountain, not yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father, John iv. 21.

Now this being the Case, 'tis evident that the Promise of a Blessing to all Nations sub-sisted in its sull Force and Vigour, during the Continuance of the Law of Moses; for as the Promise was not compleated by the giving of the Law, in which all Nations were

not concerned; so neither could so general a Promise be annulled, or set aside, by a private Law, given to one People only. And this is the true Sense and Meaning of St. Paul's Argument, Gal. iii. "This I say, that the "Covenant that was confirmed before of God" in Christ, the Law which was four bun-" dred and thirty Years after cannot disan-" nul that it should make the Promise of none "effect."

Secondly, Another Question proper to be confidered with respect to the State of Religion under the Yewish Dispensation, is this: How far the Religion of the Jews was preparatory to that new Dispensation, which was in due Time to be revealed, in Accomplishment of the Promise made to all Nations. Now if Abraham and his Posterity were chosen, not merely for their own Sakes, or out of any partial Views and Regards towards them, but to be Instruments in the Hand of God for bringing about his great Defigns in the World; if the temporal Covenant was given for the Sake of the everlasting Covenant, and to be subservient to the Introduction of it; 'tis highly probable that all Parts of the Jewish Dispensation were adapted to ferve the same End, and that the

the Law founded on the temporal Covenant itself was, to prepare the Way to better Promises. If this, upon the whole, appears to be a reasonable Supposition, then have we a Foundation to enquire into the Meaning of the Law, not merely as it is a literal Command to the Jews, but as containing the Figure and Image of good Things to come. It can hardly be supposed, that God, intending finally to fave the World by Christ and the Preaching of the Gospel, should give an intermediate Law, which had no respect nor relation to the Covenant which he intended to establish for ever. And whoever will be at the Pains to confider feriously the whole Administration of Providence together, from the Beginning to the End, may fee perhaps more Reason than he imagines, to allow of Types and Figures in the Jewish Law.

To proceed then: The Jewish Dispensation not conveying to all Nations the Blessing promised through Abraham's Seed, but being only the Administration of the Hopes and Expectations, created by the Promise of God; in this respect it stood entirely upon the Word of Prophecy; for suture Hopes and Expectations from God can have no other real Foundation. In as much then as the

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Jewish Religion did virtually contain the Hopes of the Gospel, the Religion itself was a Prophecy; and as the Jewish Church was founded to preserve, and to administer these Hopes, the prophetical Office was in some Measure necessary and essential to this Church, to nourish and support their Hopes and Ex-

pectations from God.

In what Manner the Bleffing of all Men was established with Abraham, Isaac, and Facob, we have already feen. The next Limitation of it is to the Tribe of Judab, in that famous Prophecy delivered by Jacob, just before his Death, The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet, until Shiloh come, and unto bim shall the gathering of the People be, Gen. xlix. 10. There are fo many Interpretations of this Prophecy, some peculiar to the Yews, and some to Christians; and so many Difficulties to be accounted for, whatever Way we take, that I shall not pretend to enter into the Decision of them at present. But take the whole Prophecy, relating to the Tribe of Judah, together, and there will be enough to answer our immediate Purpose, without entering into these Obscurities. Judab, fays Jacob, Thou art he whom thy Brethren

thren shall praise; thy Hand shall be in the Neck of thine Enemies: Thy Father's Children shall bow down before thee. In a Form of Words, not unlike this, the peculiar Bleffing was appropriated to Shem; Japhet shall dwell in the Tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his Servant, Gen. ix. 27. And when Jacob himself had the Blessing of Abraham fettled on him, by his Father Isaac, in Preference to his Brother Esau, the very Words in which the Grant was made to him. are these: Let People serve thee, and Nations bow down to thee; be thou Lord over thy Brethren, and let thy Mother's Sons bow down to thee, Gen. xxvii. 29. Now when Jacob uses, partly these very Words, partly others of like Import, can he be understood to bestow any other Bleffing on his Son Judab, than that very Bleffing, which he, in this fame Form of Words, received from his Father? Could he forget the Import of his own Bleffing when he was preferred to Efau? Or could he use this solemn Form of Words, and mean something quite different from the Sense they carried, when his antient Father pronounced them over him? The other Parts of this Prophecy relate, I think, to the temporal Prosperity of Judah, and promife L 2

mise a Continuance of that Tribe till the Blessing of Abraham should come, and be extended to all Nations: but I will not enter into this large Field of Controversy.

The next and the last Limitation of this special Promise is to the Family of David; a Point so uncontested, that there is no room to call it in question, without rejecting the Authority of all the Prophets; and so plain withal, that it needs no proving. Here the Promise rested until it fell upon bim, for whom it was referved, and to whom it was ever due; upon him, to whom the Birthright appertained, who was the First-born of every Creature; and concerning whom the Almighty had declared long before, I will make him my First-born, higher than the Kings of the Earth. Here it is fixed, and here it must rest, till all Things are accomplished; for he must reign till he hath put all Enemies under bis Feet; till Death itself is fwallowed up in Victory.

It is much to be observed, that the Prophecies relating to the Covenant of better Hopes, were given to the People of God, when Religion itself seemed to be in Distress, and to want all Helps to support it in the Word. When Abraham was called to for-

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fake the Country and the Religion of his Fathers, then had he the Promise of the bleffed Seed. Isaac and Jacob being furrounded on all Sides with Idolatry, in the midst of a very corrupt and degenerate World, were fustained by the same Hopes. When the People of Israel were in Egypt, and under many Temptations of following the Gods of the Country, then was the Promise settled on Judab, and the remarkable Prophecy given of Shiloh's Coming. As foon as God appeared manifestly, and oftentimes miraculously, making good the Promises of the temporal Covenant to the Children of Abraham, and the People wanted no other Evidence to keep them stedfast in their Obedience, or to fecure them from falling away to the Gods of the Nations round them, we meet with few Instances of this Sort of Prophecy. Whilft God himfelf was Governor and King of the People, and directed all their Affairs by the Voice of his Prophets, their Adversity and their Prosperity, which were always in Proportion to their Obedience and Disobedience, were a sufficient Instruction to them to cleave to God stedfastly. This was the Case from Moses to David, who had the Promise of the everlasting Covenant established L 3

established with him and with his Seed, in Reward of his Constancy and Faith towards God under all the Difficulties, thro' which he made his Way to the Crown, appointed to him by God. But when the succeeding Kings fell into Idolatry, and the People, prone to Evil, followed their Example, for that God determined to remove them out of his Sight, and scatter them among the Idolatrous Nations, whose Gods they had chosen before the Lord their Saviour; then, for the Sake of the few Righteous, were the better Hopes revived, that the Just might live by Faith, and that a Remnant might be faved. The Prophet Isaiah, who speaks so plainly of the Kingdom of Christ, entered upon his Office not long before the Ten Tribes were carried into Captivity, as a Punishment for their Idolatry: The Prophet Feremy faw the other Tribes carried away to Babylon: And Daniel was himself one of the Children of the Captivity. This was the Time in which true Faith wanted the Comfort of future Hopes; the present Scene was dark and gloomy, the Loving-kindness of the Lord was hid from his People, and they faw nothing but Tokens of Anger and Displeafure on every fide: In this Time therefore Bailide God

God thought fit to give more and plainer Intimations of his Purpose to establish the Kingdom of Righteousness, than ever had been given before from the Days of Adam. Now was it that the Seed in whom all Nations were to be bleffed was manifestly described; that the Time and Place of his Birth were appointed; his great Works, his Glories, and his Sufferings, were foretold. Now was it, that God taught his People plainly to expect a new Covenant, a better than that made with their Fathers: In a word, now was it, that all Eyes were opened to look for his coming, who was to be the Glory of Ifrael; the Defire of all Nations; a Light to lighten the Gentiles. This great Scene being opened, and placed in fo clear a View, the Work of Prophecy was finished, and in a few Years the Gift itself ceased: A plain Evidence that the Spirit of Prophecy is the Testimony of Jesus; and that all the Bleffings and Promises, given to God's antient People, were to have their final Accomplishment in the Manifestation of the blessed Seed.

The Ten Tribes, which were carried away by the King of Affyria, never more returned to their own Country; the Tribe of Judab, after seventy Years Captivity, came back to L 4

the Land of Canaan, erected a new Temple, and continued to be a Tribe and a People till the last Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. If you think all this happened by Chance, there is no room to ask you any Questions about it: But if you allow the Hand of God to be in these Events, tell me from whence this Distinction, this partial Regard to the Tribe of Judah? Read their own Prophets, and learn from thence the Character of their Tribe, you'll find no Merit in them to justify this Regard of God towards them: They were as bad as their Neighbours: but they had one Advantage, they had a Promise which none of the Ten Tribes had, That the Sceptre should not depart from Judah - till Shilob came : For the fulfilling of this Promise, and all the Promises relating to the bleffed Seed, was this Tribe preserved some hundreds of Years after the others had ceased to be a People.

That this Tribe was re-settled purely for the Accomplishment of God's Promises of a better Covenant, appears from all the Circumstances of their Condition after their Return: They were not restored to enjoy the antient Privileges of the People of God in the Land of Canaan: Those Privileges were

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forfeited by their Iniquity; their Urim and their Thummim were no more heard of; and after they were once established in the Land (a Point in which Providence was nearly concerned) the Gift of Prophecy ceased, and God appeared not in the Management of their temporal Affairs, as formerly he had done: They were often distressed, and often brought near Ruin; they suffered in all the Changes of the Empire of the East, and were, as they express themselves, Servants in the Land which God gave to their Fathers, Neh. ix. 36. I mention this Particular, to account to you the more clearly for the ceafing of Prophecy fome Ages before the coming of Christ. Prophecy among the Jews was relative to the two Covenants given to Abraham; when the Jews had forfeited the Bleffings of the temporal Covenant, and God had fully opened and prepared the Way for the coming in of the Second, he recalled his Ministers and Ambassadors, for whose Service he had no longer any occasion.

That the Prophecies, relating to the second and better Covenant, produced a suitable Effect, and were Matter of Comfort and Confolation to the Righteous among the Israelites, may be collected from some few Allu-

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fions to the Opinions of their own Times. to be found in the Books of the Prophets. That the People of Israel had, in the Days of the Prophet Amos, a Notion of some great Deliverance, or Bleffing still to come, may be gathered from the Reproof given to those, who, tho' void of the Fear of God. yet expected a Share in his Bleffing. Wo unto you that define the Days of the Lord: To what End is it for you? The Day of the Lord is Darkness, and not Light, Amos, v. 18. As some waited in Faith for the Consolation of Ifrael, fo others there were who mocked at all fuch Hopes and Expectations: To these the Prophet Ifaiab speaks; Wo unto them that draw Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and hin as it were with a Cart-rope : That Jay, Let bim make Speed and baften bis Work, that se may fee it : And let the Counsel of the Holy One of Ifrael draw nigh and come, that toe may know it, Ifa. v. 18, 19. Under the Power of these irreligious Mockers the Righteous (and fuch has ever been their Lot) were wearied and oppressed, but the Prophet speaks Comfort to them; Hear the Words of the Dord, ye that tremble at his Word; your Brethren that bated you, and cast you out for my Name-Jakes, faid, Let the Lord be glorified:

fied: But he shall appear to your Joy, and they shall be askamed, lxvi. 5. As wicked as the People of Israel were, yet in all Times were there some who waited for the Salvation of God; whose Faith and Hope are well expressed by the Son of Sirach; the Power of the Earth is in the Hand of the Lord, and in due Time he will set over it one that is pro-

fitable, Ecclus. x, 4.

That the Prophecy, given at the Time of the Fall, was understood, in the antient Yewish Church, to relate to the Times of the Messias, may with great Probability be inferred from many Passages, but especially from one in Isaiab, where after a full Description of the Kingdom of Christ, and the Happiness of those who were the Seed of the Blessed of the Lord, the State and Condition of the Wicked, in the Time of that Kingdom, is thus described in few Words; And Dust shall be the Serpent's Meat, Ifa. Ixv. 25. By what Figure of Speech, or for what Reason is the Serpent here made to fignify those, who are distinguished from the Seed of the Blessed? And how comes the Punishment of these Reprobates to be fet forth by the Serpent's eating Dust? Here is nothing in the Prophet to explain this Figure; but he feems

to use it as a Saying well known, and perfectly understood by his Countrymen; and from whence could they borrow it, but from the History of Man's Fall? There you may find the Seed of the Blessed, to whom Victory over the Serpent is promised; and there may you see the Serpent doomed to eat Dust; and the Allusions to this antient Prophecy, in Isaiab's Description of the Kingdom of the Messias, shews in what Sense it was understood of old, and for many Ages before the Birth of Christ.

These Prophecies, relating to the Kingdom of the Messias, have still a larger and more extensive Use, not confined to any particular Age, but reaching to every Age of the Christian Church: They were given to the sews of old for the Support of their Faith, and are a standing Reproof to their Children of this Age for their Unbelies: They taught those of old Time to expect the Kingdom of Christ, and are a Condemnation to those of this Time for rejecting it: They are a Support and an Evidence to the Gospel, and furnish every true Believer with an Answer to give to him, who asketh the Reason of the Hope that is in him.

They who are educated in the Belief of Christianity,

Christianity, and taught to receive the Books of both Testaments with equal Reverence, are not apt to distinguish between the Evidence for their Faith, arifing from the one and the other. But if we look back to the earliest Times of preaching the Gospel, and confider how the Case stood as to the Jewish Converts on one fide, who were convinced of the divine Authority of the Old Testament, and as to the Gentile Converts on the other, who had no fuch Perfuafion, the Distinction will appear very manifestly. The antient Prophecies, tho' they are Evidence both to the Jew and to the Gentile, yet are they not so to both in the same way of Reasoning and Deduction, nor to the fame End and Purpose. For consider; the Jew was possessed of the Oracles of God, and firmly persuaded of the Truth of them; the very first Thing therefore which he had to do upon the Appearance of the Messiah, was to examine his Title, by the Character given of him in the Prophets; he could not, confistently with his Belief in God, and Faith in the antient Prophecies, attend to other Arguments, till fully fatisfied and convinced in this: All the Prophecies of the Old Testament, relating to the Office and Character of the

the Messiah, were immoveable Bars to all Pretensions, till fulfilled and accomplished in the Person pretending to be the promised, and long-expected Redeemer. For this Reafon the Preachers of the Gospel, in applying to the Jews, begin with the Argument from Prophecy. Thus St. Paul, in his Discourse with the Jews at Antioch in Pifidia, begins with the Call of Abraham, and after a short historical Deduction of Matters from thence to the Times of David, he adds, Of this Man's Seed bath God, according to his Promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour Jesus, Acts xiii. 23. Where you fee plainly that the whole Argument rests upon the Authority of Prophecy; and all the Parts of this Apostolical Sermon are answerable to this Beginning, proceeding from one End to the other upon the Authority of the old Prophets: But the very same Apostle St. Paul, preaching to the People of Athens, Acts xvii. argues from other Topics; he fays nothing of the Prophets, to whole Mission and Authority the Athenians were perfect Strangers, but begins with declaring to them, God that made the World, and all Things therein; He goes on condemning all idolatrous Practifes, and affuring them that "God is not worshiped with Men's Hands, as ec tho'

" tho' be needed any thing." He accounts to them for the past Times of Ignorance at which God winked, and tells them, that now he calls all Men to Repentance, having appointed Christ Jesus to be the Judge of all Men; for the Truth of which he appeals to the Evidence of Christ's Resurrection, -" Whereof, fays the Apostle, he bath given Af-" furance unto all Men, in that be bath raifed " bim from the Dead," ver. 31. Whence comes this Difference? How comes St. Paul's Argument, upon one and the fame Subject, in Acts xiii. and xvii. to be so unlike to each other? Can this be accounted for any other way, than by confidering the different Circumstances of the Persons to whom he delivered himself. In Acts xiii. he argues profesfedly with Jews, to whom were committed the Oracles of God, and who, from these Oracles, were well instructed in the great Marks and Characters of the expected Meffiab. It had been highly abfurd therefore to reason with them upon other Arguments, till he had first convinced them by their Prophets; - and having so convinced them, it would have been impertinent. To them therefore he urges and applies the Authority of Prophecy only: But to the Athenians, who

who knew not the Prophets, or if they knew them, yet had no Reverence or Esteem for them, it had been quite ridiculous to offer Proofs from Prophecies: The Appeal therefore, before them, is made to the sound and clear Principles of Natural Religion; and to the Miracles of the Gospel, the Fame of which probably had, long before, reached to Athens; and the Truth of which, they being mere Matters of Fact, was capable of undeniable Evidence and Demonstration.

It is very observable that St. Paul, in his Sermon at Athens, goes no further, than calling them to Repentance, and to Faith in Christ, as the Person appointed by God to judge the World: In which Doctrine he had Natural Religion with him in every Point, excepting the Appointment of Christ to be Judge, for which he appeals to the Evidence given by God in raising Jesus from the Dead. But to the Yews he speaks of a Saviour, of Remission of Sins, of Justification of all Believers from all Things, from which the Law of Moses could not justify. Whence comes this Difference, unless from hence, that the Yews were from their Scriptures well acquainted with the lost Condition of Man, and knew that a Redemption from Sin, and the

the Powers of it, was to be expected? But the Gentiles had lost this Knowledge; and were first to be taught the Condition of the World and the various Administrations of Providence with regard to Mankind, before they could have any just Notion of the Re-

demption of the World.

With respect to the Gentiles then, the Case flood thus: They were called from Idols to the Acknowledgment of the true God, from Iniquity to the Practice of Virtue, by fetting before them Christ Jesus, the Preacher of Righteousness, and the appointed Judge of the World, under the Confirmation of many Signs and Wonders, wrought by God for this Purpose. Being so far established, they were led back to View this wonderful Scene of Providence, as it stood in the antient Prophecies; and with them the Authority of the Prophecies stood mainly upon the exact Completion, which was before their Eyes: From the Authority of Prophecy, so established, they understood the past Workings of Providence and the State of the World; and came to fee that Christ was not only the Judge, but the Redeemer of Mankind. To the Jew Prophecy was the first Proof, to the Gentile it was the last: The Jew believed in Chrift, M

Christ, because foretold by the Prophets; the Gentiles believed the Prophets, because they had so exactly foretold Jesus Christ. Both became firm Believers; having, each in his way, a full View of all the Dispensations of Providence towards Mankind.

If this Account be true, as it appears to me to be, it will enable us to clear this Argument from Prophecy of the many Mifrepresentations, under which it has been industriously clouded: It will shew us, that there is no Occasion for a Gentile to become a Yew, in order to his becoming a Christian, upon the Authority of the antient Prophets: It will shew us, that the Proof from Prophecy is not Argumentum ad bominem, in the Jews Case, nor in the Gentiles; nor yet an Argument of the same kind in both Cases, tho', in both Cases, proceeding upon real and solid Principles of Reason. But I must leave these Applications to you, and proceed to observe another Use of Prophecy, with regard to the Yews, and for which the Gentile World feems not to have had the fame Occasion.

The Jews lived under a divine Law, established in Signs and Wonders, and mighty Works, founded in very great Promises on one side, in Threatnings of mighty Terror

on the other; as far as the Bleffings and Terrors of this World can extend: They are warned over and over not to forfake their Law, or to fuffer any strange Customs and Ceremonies to grow up among them. These Cautions, intended to preserve them from the Corruptions of the Heathen Nations around them, might eafily, as in the Event they have done, grow into Prejudices against any future Revelation, though made upon the Authority of God himfelf. To guard against such Prejudices, and to render them without Excuse, it was but reasonable to give them early and frequent Notice of the Change intended, that they might not, under the Colour of adhering stedfastly and faithfully to God's first Covenant, reject his second, when the Time of Publication came. There are of this Sort many Prophecies in the Old Testament; of this Kind are the many Declarations on God's Part, that he had no Pleasure in Sacrifices and Oblations, in New Moons and in Sabbaths; strange Declarations, confidering that all these were his own Appointments! But not strange, considering the many and frequent Prophecies of a new and a better Covenant, to be established with his People. The Prophet Isaiah is frequent-M 2

ly styled the Evangelical Prophet, because of the many and express Prophecies, to be found in him, relating to Christ and his Church: Now this Prophet, in the very Entrance upon his Work, shews the little Value of mere legal Institutions: To what Purpose, says he, speaking in God's Name, is the Multitude of your Sacrifiees unto me? - I am full of the Burnt-Offerings of Rams, and the Fat of fed Beasts, and I delight not in the Blood of Bullocks, or of Lambs, or of He-Goats - Your New Moons, and your appointed Feasts, my Soul hateth: they are a Trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them, Isaiah i. 11, 14.

But the most remarkable Passage of this kind, and which deferves our particular Attention, is the Prophecy of Moses himself, recorded in the xviiith of Deuteronomy. Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken, ver. 15. The fame is repeated again, ver. 18. with this Addition; And it shall come to pass, (they are the Words of God) that who soever will not hearken unto my Words, which be (that Prophet) Shall speak in my Name, I will require it of him, ver. 19. Here now is a plain Declaration

Declaration on God's Parts, at the very Time the Law was established, of another Prophet, like unto Moses, to be raised in Time, as a new Lawgiver, to whom all were to yield Obedience. I know full well, that great Authorities are produced for interpreting these Words of a Succession of Prophets, in the Jewish Church: But be the Authorities never so great, the Appeal lies to the Law and to the Testimony, and thither we must go.

In the first Place then, the Text speaks of one Prophet only, in the singular Number, and not of many. In this Case therefore the Letter of the Text is with us; an Argument which ought to be of great weight with those, who make such heavy Complaints, whenever we pretend to go beyond the literal Sense of the Old Testament. But,

Secondly, To expound this Passage of a Succession of Prophets, and to say that they all were to be like Moses, contradicts God's own Declaration concerning the Manner in which he intended to deal with other Prophets.

In the Twelfth of Numbers we read, that Miriam and Aaron began to mutiny against the Influence and Authority of Moses: Hath

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the Lord spoken only to Moses, say they, bath he not spoken also by us? This Controversy was like to be attended with such ill Consequences, that God thought proper to interpose himself. Hear then his Determination; If there he a Prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a Vision, and will speak unto him in a Dream. My Servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine House; with him will I speak Mouth to Mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the Similitude of the Lordskall he behold: Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my Servant Moses.

Here now is a plain Declaration of the great Difference between Moses and all other Prophets, and as plain an Account wherein that Difference did lie: As to all other Prophets, God declares he would speak to them in Visions and in Dreams, but with Moses he would converse Mouth to Mouth, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, Face to Face. Herein then consisted one chief Dignity and Eminence of Moses; and in this Respect the Prophets of Israel were not to be like him.

Thirdly, That the Likeness to Moses spoken of in the Passage under Consideration, had a special Regard to this singular Privilege

of feeing God Face to Face, is evident, partly from the Text itself, and partly from the Close of the Book of Deuteronomy, compared with the Text: In the Text itself a Promise is given of a Prophet like Moses, which Likeness in the 18th Verse is expounded by God's faying, I will put my Words in bis Mouth: Which imports something more than speaking to him in Visions and in Dreams: And that the Likeness to Moses was underflood to confist in this immediate Communication with God, is most evident from the last Verses of the Book: where it is said, And there arose not a Prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew Face to Face. Who added these Words to the Book of Deuteronomy, it matters not at prefent to enquire; for, they having been received in the Yewish Church, are an authentic Testimony, first, how the antient Yews understood these Words, like unto Moses; and fecondly, That the antient Church had seen no Prophet like unto Moses: And yet they had a Succession of Prophets immediately from the Death of Moses, of whom Joshua was the first \*; and these last Verses of Deuteronomy, added after, at least in the Time of

\* Hof. xii. 13. Ecclus. xlvi. 1.

Joshua, exclude him from all Pretentions of being the Prophet, or one of the Prophets like unto Moses: And if this Character will not fit Joshua, much less will it fit those who succeeded him, who were not greater, nor had greater Employment under God, than he: An evident Proof that the Promise of a Prophet like unto Moses, was not understood by the antient Jewish Church to relate to a Succession of Prophets among them; since they declare to us, that in the Succession of Prophets, there had not been one like unto Moses.

The latter Yews have not departed from the Opinion of their Ancestors in this respect. They distinguish Moses from all other Prophets, and the highest Degree of Inspiration is styled by them Gradus Mosaicus. The Difference between this Degree and all others, they make to confift in four Particulars. 1. Moses had no Dreams nor Visions. 2. He had Light from God immediately, without the Ministry or Interposition of Angels. 3. His Mind was never disturbed or difmayed by the prophetic Influence, For God Spake to bim as a Man speaks to bis Friend. 4. He could prophefy at all Times when he would; whereas others prophefied only

only at particular Times, when the Word of God came to them\*.

Another chief Dignity belonging to Mofes, and in which the Prophets under the Law were not like unto him, is, that he was a Lawgiver. No Prophet after Moses was sent with fuch a Commission, during the Time of the Law; and yet the Prophet here foretold was evidently to resemble Moses in this Particular. " He was to speak all that God " commanded him; and whoever hearkened " not to him, was to be destroyed." Moses had no greater Authority than this, nor can any Words describe a greater. Besides, there is a Circumstance belonging to this Prophecy, which ties it down, I think, to this Sense. Moses says, God will raise up unto thee a Prophet like unto me, according to all that thou defiredst of him in Horeb, in the Day of the Assembly, faying, Let me not bear again the Voice of the Lord my God; neither let me fee this great Fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken - I will raise them up a Prophet from among their Brethren like unto thee, and will put my Words in his Mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him, &c.

It is to be observed, that this Request of

<sup>\*</sup> See Smith's felect Discourses, Page 261.

the People was made at the giving of the Law in Horeb: Moses had often prophesied to them before, and they were not put under any Terror by it; but when the Law was delivered, and God descended in Fire, and the whole Mount quaked greatly, they defired that Mofes might speak to them, and not God, lest they should die: Upon this the Promise is given, I will raise them a Prophet like unto thee, and put my Words in bis Mouth. Is it not evident, that this new Prophet was to do that, in a familiar gentle way, which God himself did in the Mount surrounded with Majesty and Terror? And was not that the giving of the Law? To apply this Promise to any thing else, is making it to have no relation to the Request upon which it was granted. The People liked Moses his ordinary way of prophefying to them fo well, that they defired he might be imployed to deliver God's Laws to them in the same manner that he delivered God's other Commands: The Request related therefore merely to the Manner of God's giving his Law; they were under no Uneasiness at his Method in conveying Prophecies to them: And consequently the Promise of God must relate to the giving of a Law to his People by one to be raifed up among themselves, and not merely to a Succession of Prophets,

Prophets, about which the People were in no Distress.

Lastly, If we enquire, from historical Evidence, after the Completion of this Prophecy, we shall find, that it did most punctually agree to the Character of our bleffed Saviour, and not to any other Prophet, either before or after him; all the Prophets of the Old Testament faw Visions, and dreamed Dreams; all the Prophets of the New were in the same St. Peter had a Vision, St. John saw Visions, St. Paul had Visions and Dreams: But Christ himself neither saw Visions, nor dreamed a Dream, but had intimate and immediate Communication with the Father; he was in the Father's Bosom, he and no Man else had seen the Father, was one with the Father, and had the Fulness of the Godhead in him. Let any Man now feriously consider this; Moses and Christ are the only Two, in all the facred History, who had this Communication with God: The Likeness to Mofes is said directly to lie in this, of seeing God Face to Face. Can the Promise then of raising a Prophet like unto Moses be possibly applied to any other Person than Christ Jesus? The other Part of the Parallel needs not to be infifted on; that Christ was a Lawgiver, will

will be easily admitted on all Hands. But the Execution of the Threat, annexed to this Prophecy, is too remarkable to be passed over in Silence; it has been literally sulfilled upon the whole Nation; every Man who considers the State of the Jews, from the Rejection of Christ to this Day, must own, that this Part of the Prophecy, at least, has been punctually verified.

This Prophecy, and many others, seem, as I observed, intended for the Jews principally, to prepare them betimes for the Reception of a new Lawgiver, and to intimate to them, that the Mosaic Covenant was not

to be perpetual.

Thus have I gone thro' the several Periods of Prophecy under the Old Testament, and endeavoured to shew the main Design and Use of it, opening a Way to a fair and impartial Consideration of the particular Prophecies relating to each Period. I conceived it seasonable, at a Time when the Argument from Prophecy was exposed to open Ridicule, to suggest some proper Observations on the Subject, for the Assistance of serious Minds disposed to consider; to throw in one Mite, as an Offering to the Love of Christ, and his Gospel, in which I hope to live and to die.

bide Anddelson's Remarks. FOUR bide Horriege four Sermons on Prophecy, in which he exhibits similar views, a goes over part of the same ground with the Bishop.



#### FOUR

# DISSERTATIONS.

- I. The Authority of the Second Epiftle of St. PETER.
- II. The Sense of the Antients before Christ, upon the Circumstances and Consequences of the Fall. With an Appendix.
- III. The Bleffing of Judah, Gen. xliv.
- IV. CHRIST'S Entry into Jerusalem.



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## DISSERTATION I.

The Authority of the Second Epistle of St. PETER.

HE Occasion I had in the First of the foregoing Discourses, to consider and compare together the Two Epistles

of St. Peter, led me to enquire into the Grounds and Reasons of the antient Doubt, concerning the Authority and Genuineness of the second Epistle. It will be worth while to examine the Fact, and state it fairly; which will enable us to judge whether this Doubt is well founded or no.

The learned Grotius, in his Annotations on this Epistle, observes, "That many of "the Ancients were of Opinion that this was "not an Epistle of St. Peter the Apostle, "induced thereunto by the Difference of "Style between this and the first Epistle, "(acknowledged by Eusebius and Jerom) and

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" by this Epistle's having been rejected by " many Churches." Huetius \* reports the Case more accurately, and tells us, that this second Epistle was " inter dubias collocata ab " aliquibus - propter flyli cum priore discre-" pantiam;" reckoned doubtful by some, because the Style of it was different from that of the first Epistle. This is the Truth of the Case, and this the only Reason, to be found in Antiquity, of the Doubt concerning this Epistle. Grotius's second Reason, that this Epistle was not received in many Churches, is too strongly expressed, and not sufficiently warranted. Origen is the first, as far as appears, who mentions the Doubt about this Epistle: St. Peter, he tells us, left one Epistle confessedly bis, perhaps too a second; for of this there is Doubt +. Eusebius informs us, That there never was any Doubt of St. Peter's first Epistle: But as to the second, the Tradition was, that it was not Canonical: Nevertheless appearing to many (or to the Generality) to be an useful Piece, it was used jointly with the other Scriptures 1. That this second Epistle

\* Demonstratio Evang. p. 21.

† Πέτρος — μίαν ἐπιςολην ὁμολογυμένην καθαλέλοιπεν, ἔςω δὶ κ) δευτέραν, ἀμφιδάλλεται γάς. Origen. apud Euseb. Lib. vi. cap. 25.

Τ Την δε φερομένην αὐτε δευτέραν, οὐκ ἐνδίαθετον μεν είναι σταςειληφαμεν όμως δε στολλοῖς χρησιμος φαινείσα, μετά των άλλων ἐσσυδώσθη γραφων. Lib. iii. cap. 3. vide cap. 25.

was received and used by the Church in Eufebius's Time, appears I think from this very Passage: He says it was used with the other Scriptures, and that all the Ground there was to doubt of its Authority, was an antient Tradition, which probably was no other than the Authority and Report of Origen before cited. That this Doubt ever affected whole Churches, or that there were Churches which rejected this Epistle, does not appear: If this had been the Case, it would have been a stronger Objection against the Authority of the Epistle, than the antient Suspicion, and more worthy of the Historian's Notice.

What Submission is due to the Doubts of Antiquity, when we have only the Doubt transmitted to us, without the Reasons upon which it was grounded, I need not enquire; but surely when we have the Reasons of the Doubt preserved, we have a very good Right to judge and enquire for ourselves. And this happens to be the Case here: St. Jerom takes notice of this Doubt, and tells us the Reason of it: The second Epistle, says he, is rejected by many, (or by most, a plerisque) because it differs in Style from the First \*.

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<sup>\*</sup> Quarum secunda à plerisque rejicitur propter styli cum priore dissonantiam. Casal. Script. Eccles.

The whole Doubt, you see, is founded upon a Piece of Criticism, started at first probably by some Man of Learning and Figure, and followed implicitly by others. The Usage and Authority of the Church, for aught that appears to the contrary, were on the side of the Epistle, and prevailed at last against the learned Observation: Which was the very Case of St. Jude's Epistle, which for a like Reason was rejected by many, but the general Authority of the Church prevailed to establish it; Autoritatem vetustate & usu meruit, & inter sanctas Scripturas comparatur\*.

That there is a Difference in the Style of the first and second Epistle of St. Peter, is allowed; but it is not such a Difference as ought to create any Doubt of the Genuineness of the Epistle. One Reason is, because this Difference of Style does not run thro' the whole Epistle, but affects only one Part of it; another Reason is, that this Difference may be more probably accounted for, than by supposing the second Epistle to come from another Hand than the first.

The second Epistle is divided into three Chapters; the first and the third stand clear of this Difficulty, agreeing very well with

<sup>\*</sup> Hieron. Catal. Script. Eccl.

the Style of the first Epistle. The second Chapter is full of bold Figures, and abounds in pompous Words and Expressions: It is a Description of the false Prophets and Teachers, who infested the Church, and perverted the Doctrines of the Gospel; and it seems to be an Extract from some antient Jewish Writer, who had left behind him a Description of the false Prophets of his own, or perhaps earlier Times; which Description is applied both by St. Peter and St. Jude to the false Teachers of their own Times. If this be the Case, where is the Wonder that a Passage transcribed from another Author, and inferted into this fecond Epiffle, should differ in Style from St. Peter's first Epistle? especially, confidering that the Style of this Passage differs as much from all the rest of this fecond Epiftle, as it does from the first. St. Jerom \* supposed, and others thave followed his Opinion, that St. Peter made ufe of different Interpreters to express his Senfe in his two Epistles; but had this been the Case, the Difference of Style would have appeared in the whole Epistle, and not in one Part of it only, which is the present State:

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<sup>\*</sup> Epist ad Hedibiam, quæst. 2.

And I see no Reason to think that St. Peter did not write both the Epistles himself.

Were this nothing but a Conjecture, yet fo reasonable an one it is, that the Doubt raised against this second Epistle, merely from this Difference of Style, could hardly stand before it. But we can go further, and shew upon very probable Grounds that this was indeed the Case.

The very Beginning of the fecond Chapter of this second Epistle shews that St. Peter had the Image of some antient false Prophets before him, in describing the false Teachers of his own Time: There were false Prophets also among the People, even as there shall be false Teachers among you, ver. 1. If you confider the Character he gives of these false Teachers, it will appear to be drawn from the Description of the old false Prophets; Such they are, he tells us, as have for faken the right Way, and are gone aftray, following the Way of Balaam, the Son of Bofor, who loved the Wages of Unrighteousness, ver. 15. A very natural Thought this, and to be expected, in a Description of false Prophets made by an antient Jewish Writer: but fuch an one as hardly would have occurred in an Original Description of the false Teachers

Teachers under the Gospel. St. Jude has this Comparison, and others of the same kind joined with it: They have gone in the Way of Cain, and ran greedily after the Error of Balaam, and perished in the Gainsaying of Core, ver. 11. These are antique Figures, and discover the Age to which they belong: And St. Jude tells us plainly that these false Teachers were waλaι ωρογείραμμοροι είς τέτο το neina, described or set forth of old for this Condemnation; and it is very likely that both St. Peter and he had the old Description before them, when they gave the Character of the false Teachers of their own Times. St. Jude's Epistle is so like the second Chapter of St. Peter's second Epistle, the Figures and Images in both are fo much the fame, as likewise the antient Examples and Instances made use of, that it has been commonly thought that St. Jude copied after St. Peter's Epiftle: And yet the Turn of Words and Expressions are so different; the Choice of Matter likewise is in part so different, some Things being mentioned in one, and omitted in the other; that it is much more probable that both copied from the same Original, and drew from it according to their own Judgments. I will give fome Inftances of this.

this, and leave the rest to the Reader's own Examination:

St. Peter, ver. 4.
Εἰ βὸ ὁ Θεὸς ἀΓγέλων ἀμαρησάνηων ἐκ
ἐφάσαλο, ἀλλὰ σαεαῖς ζόφε ταρλαρώσας,
παρέδωκεν εἰς κεἰσιντέτηρημβύες.

Ver. 6. Πόλεις Σοδόμων κ Γομόρρας τεΦρώσας καθας ροφή κατέκρινεν, πόδειγμα
μελλόνων ασεδείν τεθεκώς.

Ver. 11. "Αγελοι ισχύι και δυνάμα μάζονες όνες, & Φερωσι και αὐτῶν ωαρά Κυείω βλάσφημον κεί-

Ver. 7. Ως Σόδομα ὰ Γόμορρα, ὰ αὶ
ωθὶ αὐτὰς πόλεις τὸν
όμοιον τέτοις τρόπον ἐκπορνώσασαι, ὰ ἀπελθεσαι ὁπίσω σαρκὸς
ἐτέρας.

Ver. 9. Ο δε Μιχαηλ ο αρχαγίελο, ότε τῷ ΔΙαδόλω ΔΙακρινόμθω διελέγελο πεελτέ Μωσέως σώμαλο. κ. τ. λ.

St. Peter speaks of the Angels that finned; St. Jude gives an Account of their Sin, that they kept not their first Estate, but left their own Habitation: This Account of the Angels Sin is no where else to be found in Scrip-

Scripture, but was, if I may guess, in the old Book from which St. Jude transcribed; for it is very unlikely that he should add these Circumstances, if he had only St. Peter's αιγέλων αμαρησάνων before him. The very fame Difference may be observed in setting forth the Example of Sodom and Gomorrah, which is common to both Epistles; St. Peter speaks only of their Judgment and of their being made an Example to Sinners: St. Jude adds an Account of their Crime: And tho', as far as the two Epistles agree in respect to this Instance, the Images and Ideas are the same, yet the Turn of Expression is very different. Again, St. Peter, ver. 11. in Reproof of the Presumptuous and Selfwill'd, who speak evil of Dignities, fays, That Angels, which are greater in Power and Might, bring not railing Accusations against them before the Lord; but here St. Jude has given us the History to which this belongs, Michael the Arch-Angel, when contending with the Devil about the Body of Moses, durst not bring against bim a railing Accusation, but faid, the Lord rebuke thee, ver. 9. These Instances shew that St. Jude did not merely copy from St. Peter, but had Recourse to the Original itself, where these In-N 4 stances.

stances stood recorded, and took from thence such Circumstances as he thought proper to set these Examples in their full Light.

If we compare the different Manners of expressing the same thing in the two Epissels, we shall hardly imagine that St. Peter and St. Jude had the same Language before them to transcribe; it is much more probable that they both translated from some old Hebrew Book; which will account for the Difference of Language between them, and the great Agreement in their Images and Ideas. The following Instances will make my Meaning plain:

2 Peter ii. ver. 6.
Καὶ πόλεις Σοδόμων
κὰ Γομμόρρας τεφρώσας
καθαςροφή καθέκηνεν,
ὑπόδειγμα μελλόνθων
ασεβείν τεθεικώς.

Ver. 10. Μάλιςα ή τες όπίσω σαρκός έν 
δπιθυμία, μιασμέ πορωομένες, η κυθλότη Θυκαλαφονέν λας, τολμηλα, 
αὐθάδας, δόξας ἐ τρέμεσι βλασφημένλες,

St. Jude, ver. 7.

Ως Σόδομα κ Γίμορρα κ. τ. λ. πρόκενται δείγμα, πυρος αίωνίε δίκην πέχεσαι.

Ver. 8. Όμοίως μένδοι κὰ δτοι ένυπνιαζόμθροι, σάρκα μθριμαίνεσι, κυριότηλα ή αθείδοι, δόξας ή βλασΦημέσιν.

ώς άλογα ζωα Φυσικά, γεγεννημεία είς άλωσιν κ φθοραν, έν οίς άγνοδσι βλασφημέντες, έν τη Φθορα αὐτῶν, καλαφθαρήσον]αι.

Ver. 12. Ούτοι 3, Ver. 10. Ούτοι 3 ora whi su oidari Braσφημέσιν όσα ή φυσικῶς, ὡς τὰ ἀλογα (ὧα, ETISAVau. Ć Φθείρον αι.

In these Instances the Language of St. Jude is much plainer and fimpler than St. Peter's, and represents the Meaning common to both Epistles, much more intelligibly; and whoever will be at the Pains to examine the two Epistles carefully, will find more Instances of this kind; where the Sentiments and Notions are the same, and the Manners of Expression very different. Whence can proceed this Agreement and Disagreement at once? Had one transcribed the other, or had both copied from the same Greek Author, the Language of one Epistle would probably have answered more nearly to the Language of the other; and yet the Sentiments and Notions of the two Epiftles are so much the same, that we must needs suppose the two Writers to follow one and the same Copy; and if we suppose this Copy to have been in the Jewish Language, and that each Writer translated for himself, this

this will answer the whole Appearance, and account as well for their Difference as their Agreement. The Difference which appears in the parallel Places last quoted, may indeed be accounted for upon the Supposition that St. Jude transcribed from St. Peter. He might intend perhaps to make plain the abstruse Passages, and to that end might make Choice of a plainer Way of expressing himself. But the former Passages cannot be thus accounted for, which will appear if we consider further:

That the Subject-Matter, common to these two Epistles, was without doubt taken from some old Jewish Author by one or both of these Writers. That St. Jude had the old Book before him, and did not merely copy after St. Peter, is evident; for he exprefly quotes Enoch, meaning either a Book under that Name and Title, or, which is more probable, some antient Book of Yewish Traditions, in which some Prophecies of Enoch were recorded. St. Jude, by telling us whence be had bis Description of the false Prophets, has informed us at the same time whence St. Peter had the Materials of the fecond Chapter of his fecond Epistle; which is the very same Description, with fuch

fuch Varieties, as have already been observed. It is very remarkable, that notwithstanding this great Agreement between the two Epiftles, St. Peter has an Instance not to be found in St. Jude; and St. Jude has another not to be found in St Peter: St. Jude quotes the Prophecy of Enoch, of which St. Peter fays nothing; St. Peter refers to the Preaching of Noah, of which St. Jude fays nothing. Supposing one to be a mere Transcriber of the other, it is hard to account for this Variation; especially, considering that the Preaching referred to by St. Peter, under the Name of Noah, and the Prophecy referred to by St. Jude, under the Name of Enoch, relate to one and the same thing, the Destruction of the old World. But if you will suppose both Apostles to use an antient Yewish Book, in which the Prophecies of Enoch and Noah, relating to the Flood, were recorded, it is easy to account for the Reference to Noab by St. Peter, to Enoch by St. Jude.

This may serve to account for the different Styles in St. Peter's two Epistles, observed of old: I add, and for the Difference of Style, in the second Epistle itself; for the Style of the second Chapter is no more like to that of the other two, than it is to that

of the first Epistle. When a Man expresses his own Sentiments, he writes in his own proper Style, be it what it will; but when he translates from another, he naturally follows the Genius of the Original, and adopts the Figures and Metaphors of the Author before him. The Eastern Languages abound in high swelling Ways of Expression; and you may find in this one Chapter of St. Peter more Resemblance of this Manner, than in any other Part of the New Testament: which is a further Confirmation of the Account I have given.

But if this will help to clear one Difficulty, will it not necessarily subject this second Epiftle of St. Peter to another? It is an old Objection against the Authority of St. Jude's Epistle, that he quotes the spurious Book of Enoch, and for this very Reason \* his Epistle was placed among the air in eyopapa, or doubtful, by the Antients. And is not Peter's fecond Epistle become liable to the very fame Charge?

<sup>\*</sup> Judas frater Jacobi parvam, quæ de septem catholicis est, Epistolam reliquit. Et quia de Libro Enoch, qui Apocryphus est, in ea assumit testimonium, à plerisque rejicitur. Tamen autoritatem vetustate jam & usu meruit, & inter sanctas Scripturas comparatur. Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccl. of Di at

I will not trouble the Reader with a long Account, or any Account of the spurious Book under the Name of Enoch, which made a very early Appearance in the Christian Church, and is quoted by Irenaus, Origen, and others about the same Time. Whoever pleases to know the State of this Book, may confult Fabricius, in his Codex Pleud. Vet. Teft. But, and right good a son

'Tis no Wonder that some antient Christians, who took it for granted that St. Jude quoted the fame Book, which they had under the Name of Enoch, made it an Objection against the Authority of his Epistle. For this Book Enoch was a mere Romance, and full of the idle Inventions of some Hellenistic Yew. But then there is not the least Evidence that this spurious Book was extant in the Days of the Apostles; nor indeed any kind of Proof that St. Jude quotes a Book called Enoch: it is more likely that he quoted fome antient Book containing the Traditions of the Yewish Church, which has been long fince loft; and probably contained many Things relating to other antient Patriarchs and Prophets, as well as to Enoch. The Lofs of which was miserably supplied by forging Books under the Names of the Patriarchs:

To this we owe the Life of Adam, the Book of Seth, the Testaments of the Patriarchs, and many others of the like Nature, which were spread abroad in very early Days of the Church.

What the true antient Book was which St. Jude quoted, by whom penn'd, or what Authority it had in the Jewish Church, no Mortal can tell: This only we know, it was not among their Canonical Books. But let the Book be supposed to have been of as little Authority as you please, yet if it contained a good Description of the antient false Prophets, why might not St. Peter and St. Jude make use of that Description, as well as St. Paul quote Heathen Poets? St. Peter plainly makes no other use of it, and therefore stands clear of countenancing the Authority of the Book : St. Jude goes further, and quotes a Prophecy out of it, as being an authentic one; and can you tell that it was not an authentic Prophecy? I am fure the Prophecy itself, as reported in St. Jude's Epistle, was well founded, and was duly accomplished; and is in truth but the very Prophecy which came from God to Noah; and very probably had been communicated before to Enoch, and by him to the old World. Was it ever made an Objection against the Authority

Authority of St. Paul's second Epistle to Timothy, that he quotes some antient Apocryphal Book for the Story of Jannes and Jambres? Or is it any Diminution to the Authority of the Gospel, that our Saviour (as many Learned think) quotes another such Book under the Title of the Wisdom of God\*, and appeals to it, as containing antient Prophecies? If not, how comes it to be an Objection against St. Jude's Epistle, that he quotes a Prophecy of Enoch from the like Authority?

For these Reasons little Regard is due to the Objection of the Antients against the Authority of St. Jude's Epistle: They supposed their spurious extravagant Book Enach, to be the Book quoted by St. Jude; and they reasoned upon this Supposition; for which in the mean time there was not the least Appearance of Proof or Evidence; and the Epistle itself was universally received in the Churches, notwithstanding this Piece of Criticism, as we are informed by St. Jerom, in the Passage before quoted.

There are indeed some Notions in which these two Epistles agree, and which could not possibly be drawn from any ancient Jewish Book; for these Notions, of which I

<sup>\*</sup> Luke xi. 49.

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now speak, are Christian Notions peculiar to the Times of the Gospel.

The Passages which shew this Agreement, are these chiefly which follow:

2 Peter ii.

λείας, και τον αγοράσανία αυτές δεσπότην apripulpos.

Ver. 13. Σπίλοι κ μῶμοι, ενθρυφωνθες έν ταις απάταις αυτών, சயல்வுக்கும் ப்டிம்.

Ch. iii. 2, 3. Mvnοδηναι των σεροκερημορίων ρημάτων ύπο τῶν ἀγίων क्क २०० मीळण, से माँड मळण αποςολων ημών ενολής, TE Kueis & Duling G. Τέτο ωρώτον γινώσκοντες, ότι ελθουναι επ' έχατε των ήμερων έμ-मबामीबा, सबीबे Tas idias aulan Imbunias woed oppour

Jude. Jude

Ver. 1. Y & Sodidár- Ver. 4. Парновойxahoi, of Tives wager - our yap Tives auteur άξεσιν αίρεσεις άπω- ποι, - άσεβείς, την τέ Θεε ήμων χάρεν μεία-Tiberles es arexyear, κ τον μόνου δεσπότην Θεον κ Κύρρον ήμων 1ησεν Χεις εν αργερουσι.

Ver. 12. Outoi elem έν ταις αγάπαις υμών σπιλάδες, σωδωχέpopos.

Ver. 17, 18. Tues δε, αγαπητοί, μνήδητε των ρηματων σεροειρημερών ύπο των αποςόλων τε Κυριε Inos Xess. nuwy OTI EXEYOU UMIN, OTI εν εσχάτω χρόνω εσονται εμπαίκ]αι, κα α τας εαυίων Επιθυμίας πορδομθροι τῶν Ger av.

In the first of these Passages the Haperoreduour of St. Jude has a plain Resemblance and
Reservence to the Haperorageous of St. Peter;
both Words are formed upon the same Notion, and are meant to describe the Crast and
subtle Insinuation of the new salse Teachers.
The turning xaes eis are hyrear in St. Jude
answers the aigeous arabeias in St. Peter;
and for the rest, the Passages are nearly the

fame, and refer to Gospel Notions.

If the fecond Passage of St. Peter be read, as it ought to be, according to the Alexandrian Manuscript, which has ayanais instead of απάταις, it agrees exactly with St. Jude's; and the Feasts peculiar to Christians are meant in both Places. The third Passage relates to the Apostles of Christ; and it is the principal Passage to incline one to think that St. Jude had St. Peter's Epistle before him; for he feems to take what is proper to his own Purpose, and the Subject of his Epistle; and to leave that which has a peculiar Reference to the former Part of St. Peter's Epiftle, and to which there is nothing in his own to answer. St. Peter in the first Chapter of this fecond Epistle, and likewise in his first Epistle, tells the Christians of the antient Prophecies, fore-shewing the Deliverance near at hand:

hand: He warns them likewise against the new false Teachers in this second Epistle: Therefore collecting the Purpose of his Epifiles, he fays that he wrote to them to remind them, 1. Of the Words which were spoken before by the holy Prophets: 2. And of the Command of the Apostles, which Command respected the Scoffers in the last Days. But St. Jude, who had faid nothing of the antient Prophecies, and had spent his whole Epistle in describing the Iniquity of the false Teachers, reminds them only of the Words Spoken by the Apostles of Christ Jesus, who had, together with the Doctrine delivered to them, forewarned them, that there should be Mockers in the last Time.

I see no Inconvenience in supposing that St. Jude had as well the Epistle of St. Peter, as the old Jewish Book, which contained the Description of the antient salse Prophets and the Prophecy of Enoch concerning them, before him at the same time. If these last Passages prove that he had St. Peter's Epistle, his express quoting of Enoch shews that he had the other. In following the old Book, and enlarging from thence the Instances made use of by St. Peter, and expressing in Words of his own the Sentiments of the original

briginal Author, without confining himself to the Version of St. Peter, he did no more than it is natural for any Man to do in a like Case. But perhaps there may be another Account to be given of this Agreement between these two Epistles, by referring them to some further common Source or Original.

St. Jude calls upon the Christians to whom he wrote to remember τ ρημάτων προκρημθρών υπο Τ Αποςόλων το Κυράκ ημων Ιησε Χράς, The Words which were spoken before of the Apostles of Christ. They who do not place St. Jude in the Number of Apostles, are under no Difficulty here; it was natural for one of a lower Rank to refer to the Authority and Predictions of Christ's Apostles. But what must we fay for St. Peter, who makes the same Appeal, and was undoubtedly an Apostle of. Christ himself? Did he think that he had less Authority, or was less to be regarded, than other Apostles? Or for what Reason did he appeal to that Authority in others, which he had Right to infift on himself? This Matter is something mended by our English Version, Be mindful - of the Commandment of US, the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour. But the Order of the Words in our Greek Copies will not bear this rendering, 7 Ano-5όλων

το λων ήμῶν: Το answer our Version, we must read ἡμῶν τῶν Αποςόλων: Thus St. Paul often speaks, ἐγὼ Παῦλος, I Paul: But never Παῦλος ἐγὼ, Paul I. And since there is evidently a Dislocation of the Word ἡμῶν in St. Peter, and it must be placed elsewhere, it ought probably to be placed, as St. Jude has placed it, after Κυείε; and then the English Version must be thus—The Commandment of the

Apostles of our Lord and Saviour.

There must be something particular in this Case; otherwise for an Apostle to appeal to the Authority of Apostles, as something superior to his own, is not very natural. But if we suppose that the Apostles had a Meeting upon this great Case of the new falle Teachers, and that they gave jointly, by common Consent and Deliberation, Precepts proper to the Occasion, to be communicated to all Churches, no fingle Apostle would, or could, in this Case, call the common Injunction bis Commandment, but would certainly call it, in the Language of St. Peter, the Commandment of the Apostles of our Lord. St. Paul was an Apostle, yet was it no Disparagement to him to carry the Decree of the Council of Jerusalem to the Churches of his Plantation; and in writing or speaking he could

could not but have called it the Decree of the Apostles. The Case might be the same here.

We have some Evidence to shew that this was the Case. That there was such a Tradition, at least in the Church, is evident from the Apostolical Constitutions: In which there is mention made of a Meeting of the Apofiles upon the very Account of these false Teachers, fo particularly described by St. Peter and St. Jude. In the thirteenth Chapter of the fixth Book, these false Teachers are described to be such as workered Xers & Μωσῶ, fight against Christ and Moses, pretending at the same time to value both: And thus the false Teachers, mentioned in both Epistles, communicated with the Church, whilft they corrupted its Faith: They were, cu rais alamais σπιλάδες, Spots in the Church's Feasts, Jude, ver. 12. They are ordered to be expelled in the Apostolical Constitutions, that the Lambs might be preserved ὑγιᾶ κὰ ἄσπιλα, sound, and without Spot. They are represented in the Apostolical Constitutions, as the false Christians and false Prophets foretold in the Gospel .-Θεον βλασφημέντες, η τον ύον αυτέ καλαπατέντες; which agrees exactly with St. Jude's Account of them, - that they had been foretold by the

the Apostles, and that they denied the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 4. And with St. Peter's likewise,— Who bring in damnable Heresies, denying the Lord that

bought them, Chap. ii. ver. 1.

At this Meeting, tis said, Instructions were given to be communicated to all Churches by their respective Apostles and Bishops; there were probably then many circular Letters sent upon this Occasion; the second Epistle of St. Peter, and St. Jude's Epistle, seem to be of this sort; and being drawn upon the same Occasion, and upon the same Instructions, it is no wonder they agree so well together.

There are in the Epistles themselves some Marks which confirm the foregoing Account: The very Word [iv]onis] used by St. Peter, when he makes mention of the Apostles Authority, points out some particular and distinguished Precept: For he does not seem to refer to the general Preaching, or Doctrines of the Apostles, but to some special Command, or Form of Doctrine relating to the salse Teachers. This is that in only waged dobes a mentioned in the Close of the foregoing Chapter, the Commandment delivered to the Faithful, to guard them against the Corruptions of the salse Teachers, and to shew them

St. Jude plainly says, that his Epistle was wrote purely upon the Account of the salse Teachers: That his Intentions were to have written to them, well & nowing radinglas, of the common Doctrines of Salvation; but that he had quitted the Design, being necessitated (avayung egos) to write to them to strive for the Faith delivered to the Saints, in Opposition to the salse Teachers, who had stolen in among them.

The Sense of this Passage is lost in our Translation, as it is likewise in both the Interpretations proposed by Erasmus upon the Place; in which he has been followed by most of those who came after him. Interpreters have been misled by confounding the name of they meant one and the same thing; whereas they mean quite different Things. The common Salvation here spoken of, means the Doc-

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trines of the Gospel published to all the World, without Respect to Difference of Times or Seasons, or to particular Doctrines of the Corrupters of the Faith: The wagade-Seioa wisis is the same with the wagadobeioa colonn in St. Peter, the Form of found Doctrine, fent to all the Churches, by Direction of the Apostles, in Opposition to the false Teachers. This then is the Meaning of St. Jude, and thus it may be paraphrased: "Beloved, I " was intent upon the Defign of writing to " you upon the common Doctrines and " Hopes of the Gospel, for the Improve-" ment of your Faith and Knowledge in " Christ Jesus; but I find myself obliged to " lay aside this Design, and to warn you " against a present Danger, to exhort you to " Earnestness in contending for that true " Doctrine once already delivered to you " and all the Faithful, in Opposition to the " false Teachers, who are crept in unawares " among you."-

The Arabic and Ethiopic Versions have both preserved this Sense in some measure; the Arabic comes very near the true Meaning; the Sense of which the Latin Interpreter has thus expressed: O dilecti mei, omni studio adhibito ut scriberem vobis de salute perfecta

perfecta universali, atque communi, coactus sum scribere vobis, deprecans ut soliciti sitis in side quæ semel tradita est sanctis. The Ethiopic Version speaks of this Faith once delivered to the Saints as superadded to the common Teaching, and consequently as distinct from the xoun ounge, the common Salvation.

But to come nearer our Point, the Agreement of the two Epistles in the Description of the false Teachers; it is to be observed that both St. Peter and St. Jude profess to write as reminding their Churches of Things with which they had before been made acquainted \*. St. Jude says expresly that the very Subject of this Letter had once already been known unto them: นุ่สอนหกือลเ ๆ นุ่นลัง Bisλομαι, είδότας ύμας άπαξ τέτο, ότι ο κύριος λαον ch γης Αίγυπ]ε, κ. τ. λ. The Word (ἀπαξ) used here, is the same we met with before; the anal wagadodeira wisis, and the edoras ύμᾶς ἀπαξ τετο, are relative to the same Matter; and it appears that the Warning against the false Teachers, and the prophetic Description of them, were sent to the Churches, together with the (٥٩٥٨) Commandment. It appears, likewise, that both St. Peter and St. Jude wrote their Epistles after this Commandment had been delivered

<sup>\*</sup> Compare 2 Peter iii. ver. 2. with Jude ver. 5.

to the feveral Churches; for they write to them, reminding them of what they had before received.

This being the Case, there is no Necessity to suppose that St. Jude transcribed St. Peter's Epistle; it is much more probable that both he and St. Peter wrote from the common Plan communicated to the Churches, and drew their Description of the salse Teachers from the same Apocryphal Book. But be this is it will, yet upon all Views the second Epistle of St. Peter stands clear of the old Objection drawn from the Difference of Style between his sirst and second Epistles.



R. Perer and St. Jane were their Equillies of the Communication has been delivered

-3 1 D my abe f tile il. vei z. with Jode ver. 5.

The Sense of the Antients before CHRIST upon the Circumstances and Consequences of the Fall.



Y Intention is not to fearch after Passages in Heathen Authors, which may feem to bear fome Refemblance to the Mofaic Hi-

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flory of the Fall, but to trace the Sense of the Yewish Church as far as it can be collected.

As there are no Records left, but the Books of the Old Testament, to give Light to this Enquiry, and no Book of the Old Testament, after Moses, treats directly of this Subject, it cannot be expected that I should produce a full and regular Exposition of the Circumstances and Consequences of the Fall, from so few Remains, and in this respect so very imperfect. All that can be done, is to gather

gather up the little which fell from these old Writers, rather accidentally, than purposely; and to try whether, from their References and Allusions to this History, we can, with any tolerable degree of Probability, collect their Sense, or the Sense of the Times in which they lived, upon this Subject. historical Writers of the Old Testament were never led within View of this antient Story. by the Occurrences in which they are concerned; from them consequently no Light is to be expected. Moral Writers had fometimes Occasion to reflect upon the State of the World, and to confider how Things came into the State and Condition in which they found them: Prophets, likewife, who were Teachers of Religion, were in the fame Case; from these we may expect some Asfiftance.

You see within how narrow a Compass we are reduced; but yet no Help is to be resused which can be had in so material a Concern.

The moral and theological Difficulties relating to this Point will not be stated or discussed upon the Foot of this Enquiry. It was the Wisdom of Antiquity to bury all such Difficulties in the Abyss of infinite Wisdom

Wisdom and Power, and there to leave them till God should think proper to bring them to Light; and had we fomething of the fame Spirit, it would be the better for us. But the most Curious and Inquisitive have no Reason to expect a Solution of all the Difficulties of this fort from the Teachers of the Gospel. For what has the Gospel to do with them? The moral and natural Evils in the World were not introduced by the Gospel; why then must the Gospel be called upon to account for them, rather than any other Religion, or Sect of Philosophy? If there had never been an Old Testament, never a New one, Mankind would have been at least as corrupt and miserable as they are at prefent. What Harm then have the Old and New Testament done to you, that you perpetually challenge them to account to you for the Evil you fuffer? You mislike perhaps the Story of Adam and Eve, and can by no means digeft the Account of the Serpent's tempting and prevailing against our first Parents: Very well; let this Account then be laid aside, and what are you now the better? Is there not the fame Evil remaining in the World, whether you believe, or believe not the Story of the Fall? And if fo, what Account

count do YOU pretend to give of it? For if you pretend to any Religion, you are as liable to be called to this Account, as any Professor or Teacher of the Gospel. No body is exempt in this Case, but the Atheist; and his Privilege comes from hence, that he has no Account to give of any thing; for all Difficulties are alike upon his Scheme.

Leaving then these Difficulties, which are common to all Religions, and not peculiar to our present Enquiry, let us proceed to trace the History of the Fall in the antient Writers.

The oldest Book we have remaining, is the Book of Job; there is all the Appearance, that can arise from internal Characters, that it was written before any of the Books of Moses. The Testimony therefore of this Book is distinct from the Authority of Mofes, fince it was not derived from the Books of Moses, but was itself an original Account of the State of Nature and Religion in the old World, before Moses had committed any thing to Writing. I know that some have endeavoured to bring down this antient Writer to the Times of the Babylonish Captivity, and suppose the Book to have been written for the Consolation of the Captives in their Distress, COUNT

stress. But if you suppose it written for the fake of the Yews, is it not strange that there should not be, in a Discourse of such a kind, one fingle Word of the Law of Mofes; nor fo much as one distant Allusion to any Rite or Ceremony of the Law, or any one Piece of History later than Moses; nor to any of the Forms of Idolatry, for which the Yews fuffered, at the Time of their Captivity? The Conjecture would be as ingenious and as well founded, should any Critic suppose, that the Iliad of Homer was written to celebrate the military Expeditions of the Goths and Vandals. Befides, were it proper to enter into the Discussion of this Point, it might be easily shewed that the Book of 70b had quite another View, than this Opinion supposes. The Patience of Job is much talked of, and we feldom look further for any Use of this Book: But in truth the Book was written in Opposition to the very antient Opinion, which introduced two independent Principles, one of Good, the other of Evil. For this Reason Satan, the Author of Job's Misfortunes, is brought in with a Permission from God to afflict Job; and the Moral of the History lies in Job's Reflection; The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken asylven as an institut i away:

away: And again, Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and shall we not receive Evil? In all which, as the History expresty observes, Job did not fin with his Lips; intimating how prone Men were to fin with their Lips, when they talked of the Evils of Life, and the Author of them. The learned Grotius supposes this Book to be written for the Consolation of the Descendents of Esau, carried away into the Babylonish Captivity. He faw plainly, I suppose, that the Book could, by no means, answer to the Case of the Jews, as well for the Reasons already mentioned, as for this likewife; That the Jews undoubtedly fuffered for their Iniquity, and the Example of Job, is the Example of an innocent Man fuffering for no Demerit of his own: Apply this to the Jews in their Captivity, and the Book contradicts all the Prophets, before, and at the Time of their Captivity, and is calculated to harden the Jews in their Sufferings, and to reproach the Providence of God. But suppose it writ for the Children of Efau; they were Idolaters, and yet is there no Allusion to their Idolatry in all this Book; and what ground is there to think that they were fo righteous, as to deserve such an Interpretation to be put upon their Sufferings as the Book of Job puts

on them, if so be it was written for their Sakes? or can it be imagined, that a Book writ about the Time supposed, for the Use of an idolatrous Nation, and odious to the Jews, could ever have been received into the Jewish Canon? Whatever therefore we may think of the Book, in its present State, there is little doubt but that it was formed upon authentic Records of greater Antiquity than any Book now remaining.

The Antiquity of the Book supposed, two Questions arise to be considered, 1. Whether the Fall of Adam was known to this antient Writer: 2. What Notion he had of the Circumstances and Consequences of the Fall.

The xxth Chapter of Job contains the Discourse of Sophar the Naamathite, upon the State and Condition of the Wicked: He takes his Rife from the very Beginning; his Words, in our Translation, are these: Knowest thou not this of old, since Man was placed on the Earth, that the Triumphing of the Wicked is Short, and the Joy of the Hypocrite but for a Moment? Though his Excellency mount up to the Heavens, and his Head reach unto the Clouds, yet be shall perish for ever like his own Dung. The first Verse might as well have been rendered, Since Adam was placed on the Earth. There is no Reason to doubt but that P

that this Passage refers to the Fall, and the first Sin of Man: The Date agrees - For the Knowledge here taught is faid to arise from Facts as old as the first placing Man on Earth: The sudden Punishment of the Iniquity corresponds to the Mosaic Account - The Triumphing of the Wicked is short, his Joy but for a Moment. Above all, the Nature of the Crime, and of the Punishment here described, are strong Presumptions on this side: Adam's Ambition was to be like God, and he had the Tempter's Word to affure him he should be so: How aptly is this Ambition described in the Passage before us? Though his Excellency mount up to the Heavens, and his Head reach unto the Clouds: That is (as the Syriac and Arabic Versions render the Verse) "Though in his Pride he " ascend up to Heaven, yet shall he perish " for ever." Adam's Punishment was Death. To Dust shalt thou return. The Punishment, as described in the Book of Job, is, - He shall perish for ever: but how, or in what manner? Why, like bis own Dung, i.e. by returning to Earth again. That the Chaldee Paraphrast understood this whole Pasfage to relate to the Fall, feems evident by his Exposition of the fourth Verse, where he takes notice of the Accuser or Tempter,

as well as of the Offenders: Gaudium impiorum finitur cito, & lætitia delatoris ad momentum. What Delator, or Accuser, do we read of at the Time of Adam's being placed on the Earth, except the Tempter? To whom the Name of the Adversary, or Accuser, was afterwards appropriated; and it is the Character, in this very Book, of the Spirit permitted to plague and torment Job; which is one Evidence, by the by, that the Paraphrast understood the same Person to have been concerned in both Cases; in the tempting of Adam, and in the tormenting of Job. Our own Version, the Vulgate, and Montanus's agree in one Sense; The Joy of the HYPOCRITE is but for a Moment: But who is this Hypocrite, appearing at the very first placing of Man on Earth? It was neither Eve nor Adam; they were bold and hardy, and distrustful of God, but shewed no Guile or Hypocrify in the whole Transaction. But the Tempter's Part was all Hypocrify; he shewed great Concern for the Prosperity of those whom he meant to destroy, and well deserves this Character; and the Chaldee Paraphrast has Reason in fixing it upon him.

The next Passage that occurs, is but a bare Allusion to one Circumstance in the P 2 History

History of the Fall, and that not a very material one. In the xxxi\* Chapter, Job vindicates his Integrity in many Particulars; one is, that he was ever ready to acknowledge his Errors. Upon which Occasion his Words are - If I covered my Transgressions as Adam, by biding my Iniquity in my Bosom. -The marginal Reading of our Bible is -After the manner of Men. Other Versions give the same Sense. But the Chaldee Paraphrase agrees with our Translation. The Allusion to Adam's biding bimself is proper and apposite; but if you read, after the manner of Men, the Passage is an Accusation of others, and the Vindication of himself has a Mixture of Pride in it, which does not fuit the Character of the Speaker.

In the xii<sup>th</sup> Chapter, Job magnifies the Power of God in making and disposing all things: At ver. 16. we have these remarkable Words, With him is Strength and Wisdom, the Deceived and the Deceiver are his. If nothing more is meant by this, than that the cunning Man, as well as the weak Man, is under the Power of God, 'tis an Observation that needed not to have been prefaced with an express Declaration of God's great Wisdom and Power; nor should it be placed, as it is, among the greatest Works of Providence,

dence, the Creation of the World, the destroying it by the Flood, the settling and enlarging the Nations of the Earth, and straitning them again: In the midst of these great Accounts of Providence stands this Observation, the Deceived and the Deceiver are his. This therefore must be something relating to the general Condition of Mankind, and must be understood to be an Instance of God's Providence in the great Affairs of the World. And for this Reason 'tis very probable that the Words were meant of the Fall of Man through the Cunning of the Tempter. It was directly to the Purpose of the Book of Job to affert and maintain the Superiority of God over the Deceiver, who, by this very means of bringing Evil into the World, had grown up, in the Opinion of many, into a Rival of the Power and . Majesty of God.

There is another Passage in this Book of Job very like to the former, which considered and compared with it, will leave little room to doubt of its true Meaning. The Passage I mean is in Chap. xxvi. they are the Words of Job: By his Spirit he (God) bath garnished the Heaven; his Hand hath formed the crooked Serpent. How come these disagreeable Ideas to be joined together?

P<sub>3</sub> How

How comes the forming of a crooked Serpent to be mentioned as an Instance of Almighty Power, and to be fet, as it were, upon an equal foot with the Creation of the Heavens, and all the Host of them? Read the whole Chapter; all the Images there of divine Power are great and magnificent: Hell (we are told) is naked before God, and Destruction bath no Covering: He stretcheth out the North over the empty Place, and hangeth the Earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the Waters in his thick Clouds, and the Cloud is not rent under them - He bath compassed the Waters with Bounds until the Day and Night come to an End. The Pillars of Heaven tremble and are aftonished at his Reproof. He divideth the Sea with his Power, and by his Understanding be smiteth thro' the Proud; bis Hand formed the crooked Serpent. Can you possibly imagine that the forming the crooked Serpent in this Place means no more than that God created Snakes and Adders? This furely cannot be the Case!

If we consider the State of Religion in the World when this Book was penned, it will help to clear this Matter up. The oldest Notion, in opposition to the Supremacy of the Creator, is that of two independent

pendent Principles, as has been already obferved: And the only Kind of Idolatry mentioned in the Book of Job (and it was of all others the antientest) is the Worship of the Sun and Moon, and heavenly Hoft; from this Job vindicates himself, Chap. xxxi. If I beheld the Sun when it shined, or the Moon walking in Brightness; and my Heart bath been secretly enticed, or my Mouth bath kissed my Hand: this also were an Iniquity to be punished by the Judge; for I should have denied the God that is above. Suppose now Job to be acquainted with the Fall of Man and the Part ascribed to the Serpent in the Introduction of Evil, and fee how aptly the Parts do cohere. In opposition to the idolatrous Practice of his Time, he afferts God to be the Maker of all the Host of Heaven. - By his Spirit bath he garnished the Heavens: In opposition to the false Notion of two independent Principles, he afferts God to be the Maker of him who was the first Author of Evil; his Hand bath formed the crooked Serpent. You fee how properly the garnishing of the Heavens and the forming of the Serpent are joined together.

That this was the antient traditionary Explication of this Place, we have undeniable Evidence from the Translation of the Seven-

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ty who render the latter Part of this Verse, which relates to the Serpent, in this manner, ωρος άγμαλι η εθανάτωσε δεσκόνλα άπος άτην, By a Decree he destroyed the apostate Dragon: The Syriac and Arabic Versions are to the same Sense. These Translators applied the Place to the Punishment inflicted on the Serpent; and it comes to the same thing; for the punishing the Serpent is as clear an Evidence of God's Power over the Author of Evil, as the creating him.

The old Commentator upon Job, printed among the Works of St. Jerom, tho' he chiefly pursues a mystical Sense, yet has left us a plain Intimation how he understood these Words — Educitur ab eis (i. e. ab animabus Sanstis) et de cordibus earum excluditur ille, in quo nibil est rectum, CO-LUBER TORTUOSUS.

We need not wonder to see so much Concern in this Book of Job to maintain the Supremacy of God, and to guard it against every salse Notion; for this was the Theme, the Business of the Author. He gives, as it were, an Epitome of his Design in these remarkable Words delivered by Job: God is wife in Heart and mighty in Strength: Who hath bardened himself against bim, and hath prospered? ix. 4.

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The mention of the Serpent in this manner in the Book of Job, is the more to be regarded, because this Book being, as I conceive, older than the Mosaic History, it is an evident Proof that the Account of Moses is the antient Account of the Fall, and not a Story dressed up by himself to serve any

particular Ends or Purpofes.

But let us proceed to confider what Notions this Writer had of the Consequences of the Fall, and of the State of the World after it. The general Corruption of the World has been observed in all Times, and 'tis not worth the while to be particular in proving, that this antient Writer had the fame Sense which others had of the Condition of Mankind. He mentions the Flood, the overturning the Earth by Waters, as he styles it; but this too is an uncontested Piece of History. One Observation he has which deserves our Regard, That all the Works of Nature are prepared by God to be his Instruments either for Judgment or for Mercy: Of the Clouds he says, they are made to do what soever he commandeth them upon the Face of the World in the Earth. He causeth it to come, whether for Correction, or for his Land, or for his Mercy, xxxvii. 12,.13. The Treasures of Snow and Hail are reserved against

against the Time of Trouble, against the Day of Battle and War, xxxviii. 23. It feems not improbable to me, that these Resections arose from the Methods made use of by Providence (not worn out of Memory in this Writer's Time) in punishing the old World, in confequence of the Curfe laid upon the Ground. Such Methods they are, by which the Ground may, at any time, be curfed, and the Toil and Labour of Men increased, to what degree God thinks fit. And 'tis to be noted, that the Bleffing promifed to Noah, upon the Restoration of the Earth, is expressed by the regular Successions that should continue from that time, of Seed-time and Harvest, Cold and Heat, Summer and Winter; which is but a Promise, in other Words, that the Hail and Snow, and the Waters of Heaven, should be no longer Instruments of Judgment, but of Mercy. In the xxxviiith Chapter, God is introduced fetting forth his own great Works of Wisdom and Power; he laid the Foundations of the Earth; be shut up the Sea with Doors; he commanded the Morning and the Day-spring: After which it follows, From the Wicked their Light is with-holden. This Passage might be thought to allude to the Egyptian Darkness, did it not refer to a much older Date, and stand among

among the earliest of God's Works, as an Instance of his Power from the Beginning. The fame Reflection occurs in this Writer more than once; it is mentioned again Chap. ix. and numbered among the Judgments of God: He commandeth the Sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the Stars. Again, Chap. xxxvi. after mention of the Clouds, and of Light, it follows, By them judgeth be the People. To what antient Piece of Hiftory do all these Allusions refer? We have nothing remaining upon Record to which the Application may be made. This only I find, that when God restored the Earth, and gave his Bleffing to Noah, one Promise is, That Day and Night shall not cease: strong Intimation that Clouds and Darkness, Storms and Tempests, had greatly prevailed before, for the Punishment of the old World. These Expressions, you'll say perhaps, were used in the Eastern Countries metaphorically: "Tis true, I find them so used in this very Book of Job, Chap. xxii. 11. But what was the Foundation of the Metaphor? Metaphors do not arise out of nothing; and there was some Reason why sealing up of Stars, and darkening the Sun, were Expresfions made use of to denote a State of Sorrow and Distress. Job's Affliction is described by

by one of his Friends in this manner: Sudden Fear troubleth thee, or Darkness that thou canst not see, and abundance of Waters cover thee. The first Expression is plain, the fecond and third are metaphorical. Why the Judgments of God are represented by the overwhelming of Waters, every Man may understand who knows the History of the Flood. But how will you account for the fecond Metaphor? Or why is he faid to be without the Sun, who suffers under Trouble or Affliction in this Life? In this manner Job himself complains: The Days of Affliction prevented me, I went mourning without the Sun, xxx. 28. The fame Figure is applied in like manner by the Prophet Amos, - Seek him - that turneth the Shadow of Death into the Morning, and maketh the Day dark with Night, Amos v. 8. And again, I will cause the Sun to go down at Noon, and I will darken the Earth in the clear Day, and I will turn your Feasts into Mourning, and all your Songs into Lamentation, viii. 9. So the Prophet Joel; The Day of the Lord cometh-a Day of Darkness and of Gloominess - The Sun and the Moon shall be dark, and the Stars shall withdraw their shining, Joel ii. 1, 2, 10. And the Prophet Isaiah, The Stars of Heaven, and the Constellations thereof,

thereof, shall not give their Light; the Sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the Moon shall not cause her Light to shine. And I will punish the World for their Evils, and the Wicked for their Iniquity, Ifa. xiii. 10, 11. But this is not a very material Point, and therefore I need not enlarge on it.

As to the Origin of the general Corruption and Depravity of Mankind, this antient Author feems to suppose, that all Men are corrupt by Descent and Inheritance: What is Man that is born of a Woman that he should be righteous? Job xv. 14. The same Question is asked again, Job xxv. In both these Places there may be some Reason perhaps to think, that Uncleanness is charged upon Man comparatively only, and with respect to the transcendent Purity of God: which is a very different Thing from the Uncleanness derived from the Fall. But there is another Passage which will not admit of this Construction: In Chapter xiv. Job represents the miserable Condition of Man; Man that is born of a Woman is of few Days, and full of Trouble; be cometh forth like a Flower, and is cut down; be fleeth also as a Shadow, and continueth not. Upon this Representation he expostulates his Case with God; Dost thou open thine Eyes upon

upon such an one, and bringest me into Judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? These last Words plainly refer to the first, and shews the Ground of the other Expostulations; What is Man that he should be clean? and he that is born of a Woman that he should be righteous? For in this xivth Chapter the Question is not, whether a Man is pure compared to God, but whether he has Purity enough left in his present State to make him a fit Object of Judgment. This feems to be the Sense of Job's Expostulation; "Why art thou ex-" treme to mark all my Errors? Is it rea-" fonable to expect Purity of a Man born of " a Woman, who is by the very Condition " of his Birth unclean?" I shall be easily persuaded that Job had not entered into all the Niceties relating to this Point, but I shall not eafily believe that he charged God foolishly, by imputing Uncleanness to the Works For tell me upon what, of his Creation. ground this Expostulation stands, How shall Man be clean that is born of a Woman? Why not clean? Did God make Woman or Man unclean at the Beginning? If he did, the Expostulation would have been more apposite, and much stronger, had the true Cause been assigned, and Job had said, "How " canft

"canst thou expect Cleanness in Man, whom "thou createdst unclean?" But as the Case now stands, the Expostulation has a plain Reference to the Introduction of Vanity and Corruption by the Sin of the Woman, and is an Evidence that this antient Writer was sensible of the evil Consequences of the Fall upon the whole Race of Man. Moses tells us, Adam begat a Son in his own Likeness, after his Image; and St. Paul, That we have borne the Image of the Earthy. The Notion is the same as expressed by Job, Can a clean Thing come out of an unclean?

There is still a very material Question behind; namely, what Hope or Expectation had this antient Writer of a Deliverance from the Evil and Corruption, which prevailed over the whole Race of Man.

In answer to this Question, I observe in the first place, that the Argument of this whole Book supposes a Man to be accountable to his Maker for the Good or Evil of his Actions. This Point is not disputed between Job and his Friends; they differ widely sometimes in their Notions of God's Method of Justice towards Men; but it is an allowed Principle on all Sides, that God is Man's Judge as well as his Maker. 2. That the Wicked often prosper in this World, and go down,

down in Peace to the Grave, is a Proposition maintained by Job in many Places, but particularly and fully in Chap. xxi. Let us fee then whether his Conclusion be agreeable to these Premisses.

In the xivth Chapter, Job pleads his Cause with God, reminding him of the infirm State and Condition of Man; He cometh up as a Flower, and is cut down. He giveth up the Ghost, and where is he? - He lieth down, and riseth not till the Heavens be no The Question here asked, Where is be? may import, that Job did not suppose Death to be the final Destruction of Man. A like Paffage we find, Chap. xvii. I have faid to Corruption, thou art my Father; to the Worm, thou art my Mother and my Sifter. And where is now my Hope? As for my Hope who shall see it? Not the Men of this Generation, for they shall go down to the Bars of the Pit, when our Rest together is in the Dust. But fuch Questions do sometimes amount to Negatives. Where is he? Nowhere. What is my Hope? Nothing. Their determinate Sense therefore must be collected from the Context. - When a Man gives up the Ghoft, where is he? The Meaning of which Question is explained in the following Words, for Man lieth down, and rifeth not till the Heavens

Heavens be no more. Where is he then, or what is he, in the intermediate Space? You may reply, perhaps, that this Expression, till the Heavens be no more, may very well fignify, that Man shall never rise more; and to shew the contrary, it ought at least to be proved, that Job had a Notion that the Heavens should one Day be destroyed, and that new Heavens and a new Earth should succeed. But if this Expression be doubtful in itself, yet it is reasonable to expound it to the Sense which antient Tradition best supports. And this we certainly know from Writers both facred and prophane, that it was a very old Opinion, that the present Frame of Nature should be one Day dissolved, and be fucceeded by a Renovation of all Things. by new Heavens and a new Earth. And therefore Vatablus, a very learned and judicious Commentator, makes no Doubt of referring this Passage to Job's Expectation of a Resurrection in the Day of God's Visita-This Exposition is supported by another famous Passage, made familiar to us, by being a Part of our Burial Office, - I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that be Shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth; and tho' after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God; whom I Mall

I shall see for myself, and mine Eyes shall bebold, and not another, tho' my Reins be confumed within me, xix. 25, &c. Many worthy and learned Men have understood this Place of a temporal Deliverance expected by Job. The late pious and worthy Bishop of Ely, Dr. Patrick, particularly, has followed this Sense in his Paraphrase on the Book of Job. What he fays upon the 26th Verse will shew his Meaning perfectly, and therefore I need transcribe no more: His Paraphrase is this; And tho' the Worms, which have eaten my Skin, should proceed to consume the rest of this wretched Body, yet I feel my Soul inspired with a comfortable Belief, that before I die I shall see myself restored, by the Mercy of God, to a happy Estate. Job's Condition indeed was fuch that the Description in the Text (tho' after my Skin Worms destroy this Body) will fuit his Case exactly, and we cannot necessarily collect, from the Expression only, that he thought of the Corruption of the Grave. The other Expression (in my Flesh shall I see God) may likewise signify his seeing God before he put off his Flesh, i. e. before he died. And there is still another Reafon, which has often weighed with me on the fide of this Exposition, which is this; That if we expound this Passage in Job of a fu-

a future Resurrection, it contains a Degree of Knowledge in this great Mystery, beyond the Proportion of Light communicated to the Age in which he lived. Moses has no fuch express Promise or Prophecy, nor is there any Evidence that the Jewish Church for many Ages had fuch Knowledge. It is the peculiar Character of our Saviour, That be brought Life and Immortality to Light thro' the Gospel; and yet what do we know from the Gospel, more than is contained in this Passage, if it is indeed a Description of a future Resurrection, to be brought to Light by a Redeemer, who shall stand upon the Earth at the latter Day? These Reasons, I imagine, inclined the Yewish Interpreters to confine the Sense of this Passage to a temporal Deliverance only. For should they admit a future Resurrection to be here intended, how would it confift with the Preference they give to themselves, above all other Nations, in the Knowledge of Religion? Can they eafily be persuaded, do you think, that Job, who was an Alien from the Commonwealth of Ifrael, had a clearer and more distinct Knowledge of this great Mystery, than God thought fit to reveal to the Jewish Church? Besides, this Description in the Book of Job, admitting that it relates at all to a future Refurrection,

rection, is so consonant to the Doctrine of the Gospel, and is indeed so strong a Prophecy of the Office and Character of Christ Jesus, that it is no more to be expected of a Jew, that he should see and acknowledge this Sense of the Passage, than that he should subscribe to the Interpretation of other antient Prophecies, in the Sense in which they are applied in the New Testament. It is strange to me to observe what Stress the very learned Grotius lays upon the Consent of the Yewish Interpreters in this Case: They are, says he, inquisitive after every Thing that may with any Appearance be applied to the Resurrection, but this Passage of Job they never so apply. And Reason good; the Fews, without doubt, would be glad to find in their own Law, whatever appears to them to be excellent in the Gospel, that they may shew the little need there was for the Gospel Revelation. But would they be equally glad to find clearer Knowledge of divine Truth among the antient Arabians, than among the Descendents of Abraham? Or to see a plain prophetical Description of the grand Article of the Gofpel, even before the giving of their own Law?

The same learned Person has another Objection against those who interpret this Passage

fage of a Refurrection. He thinks, with others to whom he refers, that they all depart from the original Hebrew (coacti funt in versionibus suis multum ab Hebræo discedere.) It is happy that this learned Hand has given us, what he judges to be, the true Sense of the Passage; for it shews that no just Interpretation or Translation can be given of these Words, which will exclude the Notion of a Refurrection. Grotius his own Sense, expressed according to the Original, is so far from shutting out of this Notion, that it can hardly be made to agree with any thing else \*. For what do those Words mean, Mine Eyes Shall behold, and not another (bifce oculis meis: ego, non autem alius pro me.) If Job's Thought was, that he should be reflored to his former Health and Prosperity in this Life, why does he guard against the Suspicion that it might be another, and not

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<sup>\*</sup> Hebræa sic sonant: Scio ego Redemptorem meum viwere, et illum postremo staturum in campo. Etiams non pellem tantum meam, sed et boc (nempe arvinam quæ sub pelle est) consumerent (morbi scilicet) in carne tamen mea Deum videbo (i. e. propitium experiar.) Ego, inquam, hisce meis oculis. Ego, non autem alius pro me. — Deus Redemptor dicitur, quia pios ex multis malis liberat. Ps. lxxviii. 35. Esa. xli. 14. xliii. 14. xliv. 6. xlvii. 4. Postremum in campo stare est victoris. Sic Deum dicit victorem fore adversariorum suorum. Neque vero ei esse impossibile corpus ejus, putredine propè exesum, restituere in priorem sormam; quod et secit Deus. Grotius in locum.

bimself who should be restored? Had he ever seen a Transmutation of Persons in this World, or heard of any Man who ceased to be bimself, and became another? Diseases may waste the Body, and often do, to a great degree; but we never are afraid that they will destroy the Person, or change the Man. What is it then that Job guards against? If you apply this Passage to the Resurrection, this Circumstance, that he himself, and not another for him, should see God, is the most expressive of his Hope. Death, to all appearance, destroys the Person, the whole Man; and tho' possibly there may be a Renovation of the World, yet still it is difficult to conceive how individual Persons shall be so preferved, thro' all the Changes of many Ages, as at the last Day to find themselves to be themselves again.

But further; the Words in the Original, which we render, he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth, are in Grotius's Translation thus expressed, illum postremo staturum in campo; by which he means, he shall keep the Field (quod victoris est) which is a Mark of Conquest. Allow this, and what do they suffer, who apply this Passage to the Resurrection? The restoring Life to the World is represented as the greatest Victory and Triumph;

umph; St. Paul says, Christ must reign till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet; the last Enemy that shall be destroyed is Death. The Expression therefore, as expounded by Grotius, has nothing inconsistent with an Application of the whole Passage to the Resourcection.

But the original Word Haphar is never used, that I can find, to signify a Field, much less a Field of Battle; and I very much question whether keeping the Field was an Expression of Victory, of so old a Date as the Book of Job. It feems to me to belong to the Times when War was become more an Art, than it was in the Times of Job: Conquerors then did not use to keep the Field; and why should they, when one Battle commonly decided the Point, and the Conquered had nothing to do but to fly, and the Conqueror to pursue? And even now, keeping the Field is the lowest Idea of Victory, and fignifies little more than not being routed: And was this a fit Image to represent the all victorious Power of the Almighty? Does it not convey to the Mind the Notion of a great Struggle for Victory, of great Difficulties in obtaining the Conquest? And is fuch a Notion agreeable to the Book of Job, which

which feems to be written on purpose to shew that God has no Rival in Power?

But let us see what Light may be had by considering the Passage itself, and the Senti-

ments upon which it is formed.

It is apparent that Job founds his Hopes, whatever they were, on the Power of his Redeemer; and therefore we may expect to find in what is faid of him, plain Marks and Characters of Power. I know that my Redeemer livetb. This is a just Reflection, and proper to the Case. And if you consider these Words as spoken by a Man, in his own Opinion, ready to expire under Grief of Mind and Pain of Body, they necessarily imply an Hope extending itself beyond the Grave. His Thought is this; I am dying, but I know my Redeemer shall never die; and therefore I will still trust in him for Deliverance. But where is the Sense or Comfort of this, upon Supposition that nothing can be done to help us after Death?

And that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth. Veahharon hal haphar jakoum.) This Circumstance surely is not insignificant; and yet what does barely standing on the Earth import? Is it any Mark of Power or Dignity to stand on the Earth, on which so many Thousand weak and miser-

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able Things stand every Day? The original Words therefore (supposing Haphar to mean the Earth) should, I conceive, be rendered to this Sense, and that be shall at the latter Day arise with Power over the Earth. The fame Expression, and in the same Sense, is used 2 Chron. xxi. 4. When Jehoram was risen (va-jakom hal) up to the Kingdom, i. e. to rule and govern it as a King. Many other Instances might be given of this Manner of Speaking, which will eafily occur to those who enquire after them. See Noldius in voce (Hal) pag. 688. In this Sense Job affirms that his Redeemer should stand on the Earth, as a King stands over his Kingdom, to govern it, and to do Justice and Judgment. This Confideration to an innocent Man, fuffering undefervedly, was a great Comfort; and a proper Character it is of the Redeemer, on whose Power Job's Hope entirely depended.

But commodious as this Sense is, there is this Objection to it, that *Haphar* rarely, if ever, signifies the Earth in that Sense in which it must be here taken: *Haphar* may be, and is translated *Earth*, when *Earth* is equivalent to *Dust*. For Instance, it is indifferent whether we say, Man shall return to the *Earth* again, or Man shall return to

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the Dust again, from whence he was taken. In this therefore, and in like Cases, you will find Haphar rendered by In, Terra, Earth, by Greek, Latin, and English Translators. But when the Earth is spoken of as the habitable World, as the Place which God made for Man, or as the Place subject to God's Power and Dominion, it is not styled Haphar. And yet if you take Haphar in the proper Sense, as it fignifies Dust, the Image that arises is quite improper to the Turn of Thought in this Place. To fland on the Dust, to be founded on the Dust, are Expressions signifying a weak and tottering Condition. To fit on the Dust, and lye in the Dust, are Phrases descriptive of a State of Misery and Distress. Job therefore, who is contemplating the Power and Might of his Redeemer, could not fay, that at the latter Day he should stand on the Dust; which would, according to the Idiom of his Country, be faying, he should be weak and like an House built on the Sand, ready to fall. But,

There is another Use of the Word Haphar frequently to be met with, and which will suit all the Circumstances of this Place. We read in Genesis that Man was formed of the Dust (Haphar) of the Ground. And in the Book

Book of Job we read, xxxiv. 15. All Flesh shall perish together, and Man shall turn again unto (HAPHAR) Duft. From these, and many other Passages, it appears that Haphar is the proper Word to fignify the Dust out of which Man was made, and into which all Dead Bodies are ultimately resolved. Consider now what Job's Hope is, Tho' after my Skin Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God: He puts the Case of his being utterly destroyed, and his Body reduced to Dust and Ashes, and yet his Confidence is that he should in his Flesh see God: And if you take the Reason he gives for his Hope, as it will come out upon this Sense of the Word, you will find a Propriety and Justness in the whole Passage. As for myself, says he, I am wasting away, and this Body shall soon return to Dust again; but my Redeemer will abide for ever, and I know that he will at the latter Day arise with Power over (this) Dust, and in my Flesh I shall see God. You see how the Parts agree. 'Job, tho' sensible that he should soon return to Dust, yet trusted in God, knowing that he could as eafily restore him from Dust, as he at first made him and all Men out of the Dust of the Ground.

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There is a Circumstance belonging to this Passage, and which ought to be considered with it, to which Grotius has faid nothing, and which can hardly be reconciled with the Opinion, that Job expected no more than a temporal Deliverance. The Case is this: Tob being tired with the Opposition of his Friends, and the perverse Construction they made of his Misfortunes, as if he must needs be as wicked as he was miserable, appeals from them to another Judgment, Ob, says he, that my Words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a Book! That they were graven with an Iron Pen and Lead, in the Rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth. You fee how strongly Job insists upon his Plea; tho' Men would not receive it, yet he wishes it were graven in the Rock for ever; that it might remain till the Time, in which God would come to judge his Cause; For I know, says he, that my Redeemer liveth. Suppose Job to expect a future Time of Judgment, the whole Passage is exceeding beautiful and proper. "I find, fays he, that my Com-" plaint is difregarded here; that Man has " no Compassion for me; and that God in " his unsearchable Wisdom suffers the Inno-" cent,

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" cent, as well as the Guilty, to be unfortu-" nate in this Life: But the Time will come " when my Plea shall be heard; and so sa-" tisfied am I in the Righteousness of it, that " I would have it remain as my Monument " for ever, graven in the Rock; for though I " myself shall soon be gone, yet my Re-" deemer lives, and will at the last Day call " me from the Grave, and with my own " Eyes shall I see God my Saviour:" But if you suppose Job to expect only a temporal Restitution, within the Compass of his own Life, to what End or Purpose does he so paffionately wish to have his Complaints rendered immortal? What Sense is there in faying; "Ob that my Complaint which " you despise may never be forgotten, for I "know that within a little Time I shall be "restored by God to all my Glory and " former Felicity, and shall have no Cause " to complain any more." In one View, the Images are lively and paffionate, and the Sentiment just and proper; in the other, there is neither Force nor Vigour, nor Propriety; nor indeed, hardly any Sense.

As to the Degree of Light and Knowledge contained in this Passage, and which seems disproportionate to the Age of Job, there is this to be said: There might possibly be

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among the few Faithful in the World, a traditionary Exposition of the Promises of God. grounded upon more express Revelations, made either before or foon after the Flood, than have come down to our Times; or as Job was tried in a very extraordinary Manner, he might have as extraordinary a Degree of Light to support and maintain him in the Conflict. There is nothing in either of these Suppositions, but what is conformable to the Methods of divine Providence: nothing that intrenches upon our bleffed Lord's Office, who was appointed to bring Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel. 'Tis by Christ, and by him alone, that we have God's Covenant of Immortality conveyed to us, but yet the antient Prophets had a Sight of the Bleffing at a Distance, as is evident from many of their Predictions\*. And why might not Job be so honoured, as well as others who lived before the Days of our Saviour?

But still there is something that seems very unaccountable in this Matter; for if Job's Friends allowed and believed this great Truth of a suture Resurrection, how is it, that they continue to press their Argument, and to in-

<sup>\*</sup> See Dr. Clark's Discourse concerning the Connexion of the Prophets, &c. p. 12, 13.

fift that he was undoubtedly wicked, because miserable? How is it, that they do not reply to this Argument, and shew the Reasoning to be false, if they apprehended it to be fo? Or, if this Knowledge was peculiar to Job, how is it, that they are not surprized at fuch new, fuch strange Doctrine? And yet no fuch Marks have been observed (as far as I have feen) by any Interpreters. The Book of Job is in the Nature of a Drama, in which feveral Persons appear discoursing one with another; and how could fuch a material Affertion as this pass unobserved by all the Speakers? One would imagine, from fuch Conduct, that Job's Friends understood him to speak only of his Hope in this Life, which they might entertain as a vain Delufion, and deserving no Regard.

But I am persuaded the Case will appear otherwise upon a strict Examination; and that the Circumstances relating to this Passage, duly observed, will cast a great Light upon it, and be a Means to open to us the

true and genuine Meaning of it.

The Argument between Job and his Friends turns upon this Point, whether the Afflictions of this World are certain Marks of God's Displeasure, and an Indication of the Wickedness, of those who suffer? Joh's

Friends

Friends maintain the Affirmative; and in consequence of it, charge Job with great Iniquity, for no other Reason, but because they faw him greatly miserable. This they thought was doing Honour to the Justice of God; but Job calls it speaking wickedly for God, and talking deceitfully for him; and accepting the Person of God, Chap. xiii. as corrupt Judges accept the Persons of great Men, when they give Sentence partially in their Favour. As to himself, he resolutely maintained his Innocence, but still he depended upon the Justice and Goodness of God, notwithstanding his present Distress. His Character cannot be better described than in his own Words, Tho' he flay me, yet will I trust in him: But I will maintain mine own Ways before him, Chap. xiii. ver. 15. It is plain from hence that 'fob's Friends confined the Exercise of God's Justice within the Scene of this World, and looked no further; but He, vexed with continual Reproaches, applies himself to God in certain Expectation of another Time for Justice, Ob that thou wouldst hide me in the Grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret until thy Wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set Time, and remember me! Chap. xiv. 13. What Time was it, do you imagine, that Job defired to

be appointed for him? Was it the Time of this Life? If fo, how could it succeed his being bid in the Grave? No; he had other Hopes, and expected to be called from the Grave, and feems affured that God would not desert his Creatures even there; Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: Thou wilt have a Define to the Work of thine Hands, ver. 15. He had before declared his Notion. That Man lieth down, and rifeth not till the Heavens be no more, ver. 12. And presently he declares, that all Things were drawing to an End, the Earth, and the Inhabitants thereof. Surely the Mountain falling cometh to nought, and the Rock is removed out of his Place. The Waters wear the Stones: Thou washeth away the Things which grow out of the Dust of the Earth, and thou destroyest the Hope of Man. Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth, ver. 18, 19, 20. Thus far Job. Let us fee now how this new Argument is entertained by his Friends: The first, who replies is Eliphaz the Temanite; he appears quite aftonished, and asks Job where he had this Knowledge, whether he had the Secret of God, and had engroffed all Wisdom to bimself; he tells him, they were no Strangers to the Ways of God, but had heard as much from their Fathers as

Job had, tho' he pretended to the Knowledge of fuch fecret Things. But take his own Words; Art thou the first Man that was born? Or wast thou made before the Hills? Hast thou heard the Secret of God? And dost thou restrain Wisdom to thyself? What knowest thou that we know not? What understandest thou which is not in .? With us are both the grey-headed and very aged Men, much elder than thy Father. Are the Consolations of God (which we have instructed thee in) [mall with thee? Is there any secret Thing with thee? Chap. xv. ver. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. After this strong Expostulation, he returns to his old Argument, and offers many Proofs, from antient Tradition, of God's immediate Vengeance upon the Wicked. The next who anfwered Job is Bildad the Shubite: He talks in the same Strain, and reproaches Job with his Pretence to fecret Knowledge above others. - Wherefore, fays he, are we counted as Beafts, and reputed vile in your Sight? Chap. xviii. ver. 3. And because Job had talked as if the Heavens should cease to be, and that the Earth and its Inhabitants should fail, and the Rock be removed out of his Place, Bildad thinks him even distracted with Pasfion, and reproaches him with his wild Conceit; He teareth himself in his Anger: Shall the

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the Earth be for faken for thee? and shall the Rock be removed out of his Place \*? Chap. xvill. ver. 4. As if he had said, "What is "this wonderful Man, that he expects to "see all Things destroyed, the Earth and the Heavens to pass away, that there may be a proper Time to do him Justice? Is it not more reasonable to think that God "will do Justice here, than that all the "Works of Nature should be destroyed to make way for Judgment? Yea, the Light of the Wicked shall be put out, and the

These repeated Provocations drew from Job that noble Declaration of his Faith and Hope, which is the Subject of our present Enquiry. In the next Chapter he gently rebukes his Friends for their severe Reproaches for his supposed Error, And be it indeed that I have erred, mine Error remaineth with myfelf, Chap. xix. ver. 4. It affects not you, why then are ye so enraged? He goes on to acknowledge, in the first place, that all his Misery was from the Hand of God; and that he cried in vain, being not regarded by God, or by Man; I cry aloud, but there is no Judgment, ver. 7. But then, so far was he

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<sup>\*</sup> Ti yae, iar où antolans, aoixile i vn' searbs; What, if you die, must the Earth under the Heavens be uninhabitable? LXX.

from being ashamed of the Error imputed to him, that he appeals again with great Solemnity to the future Judgment of God-Oh that my Words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a Book! that they were graven with an Iron Pen and Lead, in the Rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth: And tho' after my Skin Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh Shall I see God; whom I shall see for myfelf, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another. Job's Meaning in this solemn Appeal may be understood from another like Passage; Also now, behold, my Witness is in Heaven, and my Record is on high. My Friends scorn me: But mine Eye poureth out Tears unto God, Ch. xvi. ver. 19, 20. From these Reasons and Circumstances laid together, it appears to me evident, that '70b's Friends understood him to fpeak of a Refurrection to Judgment, and not of a temporal Deliverance; otherwise what Occasion was there to reproach him with pretending to be wiser than all Men, to know the Secret of God, beyond what the first Man knew, or any who succeeded him? What Reason was there to charge him with an Opinion, that the Earth should be for saken for his sake? His temporal

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temporal Deliverance furely could hurt neither the Earth nor its Inhabitants. Add to this, two other Charges brought against Job's Opinion by Eliphaz, and not yet taken Notice of; he calls his Notion, unprofitable, Speeches that can do no Good, nay, which are hurtful; for, says he, thou casteth off Fear, and restrainest Prayer before God, Chap. xv. ver. 4. His Thought was plainly this; if once Job can persuade Men that God does not interpose to execute Judgment in this Life, but referves all Things to a distant, far distant Day of Visitation, when the Heavens shall be no more, there will be an End of all Fear of God, an End of all Prayer and Supplication to him\*. Taking it in this Light, we fee how the Charge arises; but could he possibly charge Job's Hope of temporal Deliverance with fuch Consequences? If not, it is a great Evidence in what Manner he understood Job; and, I think, we need no other Interpreter.

This very Passage is to me no inconsiderable Argument of the Reality of the History contained in the Book of Job, and of the Antiquity of the Book itself: For supposing the Book to be a mere poetical Fiction, upon

<sup>\*</sup> This Sense of the Passage is confirmed by a like Reflexion in the Book of Job, Chap. xxi. from ver. 7. to ver. 15.

what Ground of Probability does the Author furnish Job with such exalted Sentiments of Religion, and at the same time suppose them to be such Secrets to all his Friends? Is there any fuch Inftances in any Author? Cicero in his Dialogues introduces Philosophers of different Opinions, but we find them all acquainted equally with the common Notions of their own Times; and it would be abfurd in any Author to suppose the contrary, without very evident Reason; and there can be no fuch Reason but the Evidence of History. Consequently the Book of Job must be founded in History, and not in Invention. In the Time of Job, true Religion was preserved among a few, and communicated by special Revelation; whether therefore Job had himself this Knowledge by Prophecy, or received it by Tradition in his own House, from those who had, he might very well know what his Friends and Neighbours knew not. This Circumstance is natural and agreeable to the Times, suppoling the History to be true; but it is unnatural, and without Probability, which is the very Life of poetical Fiction, supposing the Book to be a mere Fable or Parable.

I have been much longer in examining these Passages in the Book of Job, than I intended;

intended; but this Book is so obscure and hard to be understood, that I found it would be to little Purpose to produce the Passages, without endeavouring to fix the Meaning. of them. And if I have not mistaken in so doing, the Time has not been ill employed; for the Evidence arifing from this Book is in all Respects considerable; and it is of great Moment to see those great Strokes of true Religion, and of God's Purpose from the Beginning with respect to the Children of Men, preserved in an Author who cannot be charged with Jewish Education or Prejudices; but who was born in another Country, of another Family, and does not appear to have heard of Moses, or his Law, and yet the Secret of God was with him.

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I will be very short in what follows.

We may consider the Book of Pfalms, the Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, as the Productions of one and the same Age; and there is no Reason to think, but that the Writers had the same Opinions in the Subject-Matters of our Enquiry. If we find less than it may seem reasonable to expect from these Writers, upon the Subject of the Fall, and the Promise made to Adam, there is a plain Reason to be given why it is so; for the great Promises made to David of a Son, whose

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Kingdom Should endure for ever, had eclipfed all the antient Hopes, and so entirely posfessed the Mind of the Psalmist, and of his Son Solomon, that they feldom look higher than the immediate Promifes of God to themselves. And yet God's Method of opening gradually his Purposes to different Ages was understood by Solomon, who tells us, That the Path of the Just is as the Shining Light, that Shineth more and more unto the perfect Day, Prov. iv. 18. The Case was much the same with the succeeding Prophets; they were Ministers of new Declarations made by God, and had no Occasion to treat of the old. And of the later Writers. none treat expresly of this Subject; if ever they mention it, it is only occasionally, and in transitu. All the Help therefore to be had in this Case must come from Hints and Allusions, and Ways of speaking, which refer to antient Things, and shew the Writer's Sense concerning them. Thus when Solomon tells us, He applied his Heart to know - the Reason of Things, and to know the Wickedness of Folly, even of Foolishness and Madness; and then declares the Refult of all his Enquiry, Lo, this only have I found, that God bath made Man upright, but they have fought out many Inventions, Eccles. vii. 25, 29. When he

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he tells us that there is not a just Man upon the Earth that doeth good, and finneth not, ver. 20. Not one who can fay, I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my Sin. Prov. xx. o. When David tells us that he was Shapen in Iniquity, that in Sin did his Mother conceive bim, Pfalm li. 5. and that in the Sight of God no Man shall be justified, Pfal. cxliii. 2. When we read in the Book of Wisdom, that God madenot Death, neither bath be Pleasure in the Destruction of the Living. For he created all Things, that they might bave their Being; and the Generations of the World were healthful: And there is no Poison of Destruction in them; nor the Kingdom of Death upon the Earth. For Righteousness is immortal. But ungodly Men with their Works and Words called it to them, Wifd. i. 13, 14, 15, 16. And again, That God created Man to be immortal, and made him to be an Image of his own Eternity. Nevertheless, through Envy of the Devil came Death into the World; and they that do hold of his Side do find it, Wisd. ii. 23, 24. When the Son of Sirach tells us, That Error and Darkness had their Beginning together with Sinners, Ecclus xi. 16. That Death is the Sentence of the Lord over all Flesh, Ecclus xli. 3. That the Covenant from the Beginning

Beginning was, Thou shalt die the Death; Ecclus xiv. 17. That of Woman came the Beginning of Sin, and through her we all die, Ecclus xxv. 24. That God, at the first, filled Man with the Knowledge of Understanding, and shewed him Good and Evil, Ecclus xvii. 7. And left him in the Hand of his (own) Counsel, Ecclus xv. 14. When, I say, we read and compare all these Passages together, can there be any reasonable Foundation to doubt in what Sense the antient Jewish Church understood the History of the Fall, or what Consequences they ascribed to it?

When we find the Wicked, and the Enemies of God, represented under the Image of a Serpent, Isa. xiv. 29. xxvii. 1. Micah vii. 17. of Leviathan the crooked Serpent; of a Dragon, Isa. xxvii. 1. When we hear the Wretchedness of the Idolater described by the Prophet in the following Terms, He feedeth of Ashes: A deceived Heart bath turned bim aside that he cannot deliver his Soul, Isa. xliv. 20. And when we hear David singing the Triumphs of his Son, to whom the everlasting Kingdom was promifed, in such Strains as these, His Name shall endure for ever: His Name shall be continued as long as the Sun: And Men shall be blessed

in bim; all Nations shall call bim bleffed, Pfalm Ixxii. 17. His Enemies Shall lick the Duft, ver. 9. He shall tread upon the Lion and Adder: The young Lion and the Dragon shall be trample under Feet, Psalm xci. 13. He shall bruise bis Enemies with a Rod of Iron, Pfalm ii. 9. When we hear likewise the Prophet describing the Kingdom, which he foretold, in like Figures, and representing the State of the Wicked under that Kingdom, in these very Words, and Dust shall be the Serpent's Meat, Isa. lxv. 25. Can we give any tolerable Account of these Things, but by supposing David to understand, that the Son promised to him, in whose Time Righteousness and Truth were to be established, was the very Seed of the Woman, who should bruise the Serpent's Head? Could the Prophets understand their Prediction to belong to any other, when the Triumph of his Reign was to be a Victory over the Serpent, whose Food should then be Dust? Of the same Person David and the Prophets foretel, that he should rule over all Nations, that Men should be bleffed in him, that all Nations should call bim bleffed; which is the distinguishing Character of the bleffed Seed promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. From all which 'tis evident, that the Seed

of the Woman, who should bruise the Serpent's Head; the Seed promised to Abraban, in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be bleffed, the Son promised to David, to fit on his Throne for ever; and the King, who should rule out of Sion, foretold by the Prophets, is ONE and the SAME Person: That the Purpose of God, in giving the Word of Prophecy, was the same in every Age: That Christ has, under different Degrees of Light, been fet forth from the Beginning, as the Hope of the World: That He it was, whose Day the Faithful in every Age defired to fee : He it was, who preserved the first formed Father of the World, that was created alone, and brought him out of his Fall, Wifdom x. 1. He it is, who shall reign till all Enemies are put under bis Feet, till Death and Hell are cast into the Lake of Fire, Rev. xx. 14.



APPENDIX.

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## APPENDIX

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# Second Differtation:

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Farther Enquiry into the Mosaic Account of the FALL.



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#### ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following additional Dissertation was drawn up some Years since, and was intended as an Examination of the Objections made to the History of the Fall by the Author of the literal Scheme of Prophecy. That Author has been dead some Years, and I have now nothing to say to him; and have therefore considered the Objections not as his, but as common to all, who call in Question or are offended with the History of the Fall, as it stands recorded by Moses.



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## DISSERTATION II.



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HE main Difficulty confifts in determining what we are to understand by the Serpent, who is represented by Moses as the

Tempter and Deceiver of our first Parents. In order to this, we must consider distinctly what is ascribed to this Serpent.

This Serpent, we are told, was more fubtle than any Beaft of the Field, which the Lord God bad made, Gen. iii. 1. The Comparison here being made between this Serpent and the Beaft

Beast of the Field, intimates to us, that this Serpent was really a Beast of the Field; for between the Beast of the Field and Beings of an higher Order no Comparison properly lies in respect to their Subtlety

and Understanding.

Again: The Curse denounced against this Serpent is adapted to the State and Condition of a natural Serpent, and is literally applicable to no other kind of Being: Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all Cattle, and above every Beast of the Field; upon thy Belly shalt thou go, and Dust shalt thou eat all the Days of thy Life. And I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed; it shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel, Gen. iii. 14, 15.

These are the Circumstances in the History, which lead us to conclude, that a real Serpent had Part in this Transaction. On

the other Side,

This Serpent appears to have the Use of Language, and of Reason: nor is it said, that these Faculties were conveyed to him upon this Occasion, (which is the Case of Balaam's Ass, it being expressly noted in the

the Text, that the Lord opened the Mouth of the Ass) Numb. xxii. 28. but these Faculties are mentioned as natural to this Serpent. When he talks and reasons with Eve, Morses relates this Fact as an Historian.

This Serpent talks and reasons, not upon fuch trivial Things, of which we may fuppose the Beast of the Field (if they have any Reason) to have some Notion; but he reafons upon the Nature of God and of Man, upon the Knowledge of Good and of Evil; upon the Nature and Tendency of the Law given to Man: he looks back and reflects upon the Policy in which that Law was founded, and the Art of the Governor in keeping his Subjects in Ignorance and blind Obedience; he looks forward and foretels the happy Consequences of throwing off this Yoke, and persuades the Woman, that she and her Husband should be as Gods, if they could have the Courage to break through the Restraint of this iniquitous Law.

What think you now? Are these the Properties of a mere Brute Creature? Or is there any Instance of an Author, who ever seriously introduced the Beast of the Field thus reasoning, and thus discoursing?

And yet there are who suppose this Serpent to be a mere Beast of the Field, and no more, and reckon that Moses recounting this Story, intended to relate what paffed between a mere natural Serpent and Eve as the most plain Matter of Fact. We are told too, that this Interpretation is fuited to the Notions of the Antients, who thought Beasts had, in the first Ages of the World, the Use of Speech; in which Remark the truly Antient are much abused. For these Antients, as they are called, were indeed Moderns with respect to the Times of which they give Judgment; and there is not the least Footstep of Evidence, that ever there was fuch an Opinion in the World. Men of later Ages, misled by the antient Way of Writing, may have imputed such an Abfurdity to the Times long before their own; but that ever any Age, or any reasonable Man in any Age, had really fuch a Perfuafion, there is not the least Pretence to affirm. The Story of Balaam's Ass is pretended to be a Proof that the Antients had fuch a Notion; but confult the Text, and you will fee this Story is recorded, not as a most plain, but as a MOST MIRACULOUS Matter of Fact: And wherever antient History reports as Matter

Matter of Fact, that any Brute Creature spoke, the Thing is always treated as a Prodigy, and the Effect of some supernatural Power: and the Story commonly ends in Consultation of the Oracle among the Greeks, and the Sibylline Books among the Romans, to know how the Omen was to be averted and the Gods appealed, who were ever thought concerned in such surprizing Events.

We read in Scripture, that the Trees went forth at a Time to anoint a King over them, and they faid unto the Olive-tree, Reign thou over us, &c. Judges ix. 8. This, I suppose, will not be taken for another most plain, Matter of Fact, and construed as if the Antients had a Notion that Trees also could speak in the first Ages of the World. But if we must depart from the literal Meaning in this Case, what are the Rules of Criticism that oblige us to maintain it in the principal Case before ns? Surely it is not more unnatural for Trees to hold a Council for the Choice of a King, than for a mere Serpent to treat with Eve, upon the Subjects of her Obedience to God, and the Nature and Tendency of the Law of Paradife.

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But we are so used to Fables, and this of the Trees is so evidently such, that we may perhaps imagine we fee a Difference in these two Cases, without troubling ourselves to examine the Grounds of fuch Judgment. Let us see then whether this way of literal Interpretation will fuit other Places better. We read in Numbers, that a Star shall come out of Jacob, &c. Numb. xxiv. 17. literally means the Patriarch fo called; but he had been long dead before this Saying was heard; and had he been living, the same Difficulty would occur in ascertaining the literal Sense of the Word Star. It is said of God, in the Book of Psalms, Thou breakest the Heads of the Dragons in the Waters, Pf. lxxiv. 13. and the Prophet Isaiab threatens Leviathan the piercing Serpent, with Judgments from God, If. xxvii. 1. Must we suppose that the Pfalmist is finging the Triumphs of God's Victory over a Dragon, and that the Prophet is foretelling the Destruction of a mere Serpent? Or shall we refign this literal Meaning to the Dictates of common Sense, the Evidence of History, and God's own Expofition in the Prophet Ezekiel? The Word of the Lord came unto me faying, Son of Man, fet thy Face against Pharaoh King of Egypt, -Speak

- speak and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against thee, Pharaoh King of Egypt, the great Dragon that lieth in the Midst of bis Rivers, Ezek. xxix. 1, 2, 3. If it shall be faid, that the Pfalms and Prophets are of too late a Date to determine the Use of Language in the Time of Moses, the Author of the Book of Genefis; why then, let the Author of the Book of Genesis speak for himfelf, and tell us, whether by the Term Serpent he always means a natural Serpent. Dan (they are the Words of Genefis) shall be a Serpent in the Way, an Adder in the Path; that biteth the Horses Heels, So that his Rider shall fall backward, Gen. xlix. 17. Here is a Serpent described by that very Character which is urged as determining the Serpent of the Fall to be a natural Serpent. " The very Words of the Curse, we are told. " imply or foretel a perpetual War between " " Man and that Beast of the Field, the " Serpent; and that fuch a War, wherein " Men by walking with naked Feet and " Heels, as they do in the Eastern Coun-" tries, were very liable to the Attacks of

" Serpents, that were very venomous and

" numerous there."

Let this Observation be carried to the xlixth Chapter of Genesis, and the Passage from thence quoted. There you will find a Serpent, that bites Horses by the Heels, fo that the Rider falls backward. What wants there more to prove this a natural Serpent? And yet, the Author of this Passage tells us, that he meant Dan, or the Tribe of Dan, by the Serpent and the Adder; and consequently, by biting of the Horses Heels, he did not mean that Dan would in the literal Sense, bite Horses by the Heels, but he intended by this metaphorical Expression, to describe the subtle and mischievous Practices of that Tribe. There will be Occasion to mention this Pasfage again: The Use now made of it is only to shew, that the Circumstance of the Serpent's bruifing the Heel of the Woman's Seed, in the History of the Fall, does by no Means determine the Serpent there mentioned to be a mere natural Serpent.

But Respect, perhaps more than enough, has been paid to this Opinion, of which the learned Pirerius has left this Censure; Quanibil prosecto dici cogitarive potest incredibilius et absurdius. In Genes. p. 192.

Let us come then to the true Import and Meaning of the Prophecy, and examine whether any real Difficulty lies in the way of a reasonable Enquirer.

- I. If there be any Truth at all in this History, we must necessarily suppose the Tempter to be a rational Agent; for if reasoning will not be allowed to be a certain Characteristic of a rational Being, there must be an End of all reasoning upon the Point.
- 2. If upon the Foot of natural Religion it must be maintained, that the Author of all Things is a good Being, it necessarily follows, that the Tempter was an evil Being. For he acts in direct Opposition to the Creator; he charges him with Malice and Envy towards his Creatures; he attempts, and succeeds in his Attempt, to draw his Subjects into Disobedience; and for this no Reason can be assigned, but the mere Pleasure of affronting God, and making Man miserable.
- 3. This Tempter being mentioned under the Name and Character of a Serpent, there have been various Opinions in accounting for this Circumstance of the History. Among these, the most considerable,

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as they appear to me, are the two following:

First, That which supposes a real Serpent to have appeared, under the Management of the evil Being, and as his Instrument in the Fraud.

Secondly, That which supposes the evil Being to have transacted the whole himself, (under what Form or Appearance this Opinion pretends not to determine) and that the Term Serpent is used metaphorically to denote immediately this wicked Being. I will state the Reasons of these Opinions as clearly as I can.

Both of them have some Support from the Text, and both have Difficulties from the Text which lie in their Way. But then it is to be observed, that neither the Substance of History, nor any one Conclusion that can be drawn from it, is in the least affected by this Difference in Opinion as to this Circumstance. For it being agreed on both Sides, that an evil Being was the Tempter, it signifies little in this respect, whether he was only called a Serpent, or whether he made Use of a Serpent, as the Instrument of his Deceit. Let any Man try what Objections he can raise from one Opinion,

Opinion, or from the other, against any known Conclusion from this History. If he can raise none, it is evident this Point of Difference does not affect any Thing in which Religion can be concerned.

If a real Serpent was concerned in this Case, then the Expressions of Moses are literal, and represent bistorically all that But these literal Expressions passed visibly. necessarily lead us to conceive that another, and much higher Being than a Serpent was concerned: for, however literally true these Expressions may be of that Serpent, yet naturally they cannot be true of any mere Serpent. The Rod of Moses was a Piece of real Wood, and 'tis literally faid, that this Rod divided the Red Sea, and yet 'tis naturally impossible it should do so; but not more fo, than that a mere Serpent should argue, reason, tempt, and seduce Eve.

If no real Serpent was concerned, then the History remains the same, but the Language is metaphorical. The same evil Being argues, reasons, tempts, and seduces Eve; and being not known among the Jews by any Name peculiar to himself, or perhaps being well known by this very Name at the Time the History was written, he is call-

ed Serpent. And 'tis to be observed, that the Name Satan, by which this evil Being is afterwards known in the Jewish Books, was given him in Consequence of the Enmity he shewed to Man in this and other Temptations: And therefore before the Temptation it does not appear that he had a proper Name by which the Historian could denote him.

Those who are for a literal Sense urge, that the Narration here is historical, and that we ought not to suppose a Metaphor to run through the Character of a Person chiefly concerned; that however this may be admitted in the poetic and prophetic Style, yet in the historical 'tis absurd: That the Tempter is not only called a Serpent, but he is treated as such: He is said to be wifer than the Beasts of the Field: He is doomed to eat Dust; to creep on his Belly; and he is described by a natural Property of the Serpent, the biting Men by the Heels.

To which others, otherwise minded, reply, that the Tempter had no proper Name known to the Persons to whom the History is directed; that it was necessary either to omit his Story, or to speak of him under a

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borrowed Name: That the Historian has intimated the Reason why he called him Serpent, because the Serpent is the most subtle in its kind, and is therefore the most natural Emblem of a Deceiver; that he has in his Account of this Deceiver, sufficiently declared who he was, it not being possible for a Serpent to do, what the History ascribes to the Tempter: That the Punishment of the Deceiver being conceived in Terms applicable to the Serpent, is no more than was to be expected, since a Metaphor once introduced must be pursued; that being necessary in this Case, which Horace prescribes in another,

——Servetur ad imum Qualis ab incepto.

That for the same Reason Dan being called a Serpent, it follows, that he should bite the Horses Heels.

They say farther, that those who are for the literal Sense, and suppose the Serpent to be the Instrument of an evil Being, have not so easy and natural an Account to give of the mention that is made of the Serpent's Subtlety. For since in their Scheme it was

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the Subtlety of the evil one, and not of the Serpent, which deceived Eve, to what Purpose is the Subtlety of the Serpent at all mentioned in a Case where it had nothing to do? The most stupid Creature might have served the same Purpose under the same Management; and it was quite foreign to the Purpose to take any Notice of the Cunning of the Instrument, on which nothing de-

pended.

They add farther, that either antecedently to the writing this History, or by a Figure introduced upon the Foundation of this Story, it was usual in the Jewish Language to describe great and oppressive Powers, and particularly the Power of the Devils, under the Figure and Image of Serpents. Be the Case as it will, it affords an Evidence how the Word Serpent was understood in this History by the Yewish Church. When our Saviour's Disciples told him, that even the Devils were subject to them, he replies, in Language as plain to be understood, (for known Figures have an ascertained Meaning) I give unto you Power to tread on Serpents and Scorpions, and over all the Power of the Enemy, Luke X. 19.

To this last Interpretation it is objected, "That it supposes the most plain Matter of Fact to be Fable, or Parable, or Al-

" legory."

Fable, Parable, and Allegory, are Words thrown own at random, and without Distinction. Metaphorical Representations bear fome Resemblance to Fable and Parable, as both owe fomething to Imagination; but in other Respects they differ widely. In Fables and Parables the very subject Matter is feigned History: In Metaphors the subject Matter may be something real, and the Expression only is borrowed from Imagination. The feigned Matter of a Parable or Fable may be related without the Use of one Metaphor; and the feigned Language of Metaphors, mixed in historical Narrations, may be expounded by the Rules of Grammar and Rhetorick, so as to represent a History real in every Circumstance. Metaphors and Parables are, indeed, in the Sense of Rhetoricians, Allegories; and so is every Figure of Speech, ubi aliud dicitur aliud intelligitur. But an Allegory, in the Language of Divines, is quite another thing; it is not THE φωνης, but τέ πράγματ Φ μεταφορά, a Change not of Language, but of the very Substance of

of a Narration from one Thing to another. Such Allegories have no relation to Figures of Speech, and oftentimes have been introduced, where the Story, which is the Groundwork of the Allegory, is told in the simplest Terms, without the Mixture of a Metaphor, or any other Figure. The Works of Cicero abound in Metaphors, and other Figures of Rhetorick; will you therefore call the Interpreters, who give his true Sense in plain Words, Allegorizers? Or is there any more of the allegorical Spirit to be discovered in expounding the Metaphors of the Bible, than in expounding the Metaphors of Cicero?

As to myself, how doubtfully soever I expressed myself formerly, the more I consider this Case, the more inclined I am to think, that a real Serpent was seen by Eve. Here are three Agents concerned, Adam, Eve, and the Serpent; the Words addressed to Adam and Eve, in pronouncing Sentence upon them, are not metaphorical; and what Reason is there to suppose, that in condemning the third, the Style should change, and Sentence be passed upon another Being, with whom Adam or Eve had no Intercourse? If neither of them had seen or conversed

versed with a Serpent, how could they acrecount for a Serpent's being doomed to go upon his Belly, and to eat Duft, because fome other Being had deceived them? Befides, if we can render a Reason for calling the Tempter Serpent, and so far account for the Metaphor in the Mosaic History; yet can we suppose, that Moses has taken the fame Liberty with the very Words of God, and changed the real Sentence upon the Tempter into a metaphorical Punishment on a metaphorical Person, introduced to represent him? And if Moses has given us the real Words of God, in pronouncing Sentence on the Tempter, there can be but little Doubt, that the Tempter appeared and acted as a Serpent; and a Judgment passed upon the visible Agent in this Fraud, was a Judgment upon the Deceiver himself, whoever he was, and could no otherwise be understood at the Time.

As to the Language of Scripture, calling evil and wicked Men Serpents and Scorpions, and particularly as to the Words of Jacob, reprefenting the Tribe of Dan as a Serpent in the Way, &c. they are so far from proving, that there was no real Serpent concerned in the Fall, that the very Reason T 2 why

why they are called Serpents, is, because the first Deceiver was a Serpent, and lest his Name to all Deceivers who came after him. For allowing this Expression with respect to Dan and others to be metaphorical, yet all Metaphors have Relation to something real; and a real Serpent acting in the first and great Deceit, all other Deceivers are called Serpents, as properly as strong Men are often styled Sampsons, or Goliabs; Names that never would have been thought of, had they not been borne by Men remarkable for real and extraordinary Strength.

Against this Interpretation an Objection is formed, from the kind of Punishment inflicted on the Woman and the Serpent. The Woman's Sorrow in Conception was to be multiplied, and the Serpent was to go on his Belly; and these are so far from being admitted to be Punishments, that we are told they are necessary Consequences of their original Make and Formation. That Women bring forth with Pain, and that Serpents move on the Belly, is known to every body, and so far this State of Things answers directly to their respective Judgments; and supposing such Judgment to have been passed by God, the present State

of the Woman and the Serpent could not possibly be otherwise than they are: So that from the present State of Things, no possible Objection can be raised against the Truth, or even the Probability of the Monsaic History. Where is the Difficulty then: Why, it is said, that their State was always the same, as well before as after the Fall? But how do you know this? Who could inform you of it?

If you argue from a Fact of which you have neither Knowledge nor Information, what Support have you? Will you fay that God, who created all Beings, cannot alter the State or Condition of any Being in any respect from what it was originally? This is such a Limitation on the Power of God, as is directly inconfistent with our Notions of the Divine Attributes; and it will be very easy to shew, in the Particulars of several Species of Animals, as great Deviations from the Original Course of Nature, as these now under Consideration are; and why cannot God do that in the whole Species, if he sees Reason to do it, which he manifestly does in many particular Cases? How the original State and Formation of the Woman and the Serpent differed from the T 3

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effected, I neither know, nor shall enquire.

When Zacharias, Father of John the Baptist, was stricken dumb instantaneously, can you tell what Change was made in his Organs of Speech, or how this Alteration was effected? But suppose that the same Change had been made univerfally, would not the World have been speechless? And can you doubt whether the same Power could do this in every Man's Case, which was done in the Case of Zacharias? Would not this have been a Curse upon Man, as extensive and as fatal as the Curse of the Fall was to the Woman or to the Serpent, and as contrary to what we call the Course of Nature, and as hard to be accounted for? And if we consider rightly Nature is nothing: All Powers are the Gift of the Creator, and every Being subfifts, not by the Law and Appointment of Nature, but by the Law and Appointment of God, who is Master of his own Laws and Appointments, and can change them whenever he pleases; and Nature will follow and obey his Command, and ever be what he intends it should be. But to proceed: I has my a languo ad woll

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That our Saviour understood the Devil to be the Tempter, appears plainly from the Parable of the Tares and his Exposition of it. The Parable is this: The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a Man which fowed good Seed in his Field. But while Men flept bis Enemy came, and forced Tares among the Wheat, and went his Way. But when the Blade was sprung up, and brought forth Fruit, then appeared the Tares also. So that the Servants of the Housbolder came and said unto bim: Sir, didst not thou fow good Seed in thy Field? From whence then bath it Tares? He faid unto them, an Enemy bath done this. The Servants faid unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he faid, Nay: lest while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up also the Wheat with them. Let both grow together until the Harvest; and in the Time of Harvest, I will say to the Reapers, gather ye together first the Tares, and bind them in Bundles to burn them; but gather the Wheat into my Barn, Matth. xiii. 24, 25, &c.

The Housholder, you see, being asked, whence hath the Field Tares, gives this short Answer, An Enemy bath done this.

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As to the Manner and Method of doing it, he is filent; it was a Point in which the Servants had no Concern.

Our Saviour explains this Parable, and applies it to God's Government of the World, for the Instruction of his Disciples, to whom it was given, to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Field is the World, the good Seed are the Children of the Kingdom, the Tares are the Children of the wicked one. Here then our Saviour had the great Point before him; How came Evil into the World? All the Anfwer he gives to it is, the Enemy that fowed the Tares is the Devil. Could our Lord be ignorant of the History of the Fall, and of the first Introduction of Evil into the World? Or could he forget it when he was accounting for the Work of Providence, with respect to the Beginning of Evil, that every where abounded? He does not indeed enter into the curious Questions relating to the Origin of Evil, but he tells us who first brought it in, the Devil. The Devil, therefore, was that very Serpent who tempted Eve, that Enemy who fowed those Tares, which have overspread the World.

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When our Lord tells us, that the good Seed was fown by the Son of Man, and that the good Seed are the Children of the Kingdom, and that the Tares are the Children of the wicked one, can we doubt whether he had in View that Part of the Prophecy, I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and ber Seed. As our Lord has expressly told us, that the Enemy who brought Evil into the World, was the Devil, he has as clearly, if attended to, told us, that the Restorer of Righteousness, was that very Seed, promised to the Woman, who was to bruise the Serpent's Head. The good Seed he fays was fown by the Son of Man. Who is this Son of Man? Every Man, every Son of Man is not a Sower of good Seed: far otherwise. The Son of Man then must denote some particular Person, distinguished from all other Children of Men: Let us see who this must be. Every Man is undoubtedly a Son of Man, and may be fo ftyled; but THE Son of Man emphatically, and distinguished from other Sons of Men, is a Title never applied to any other Person but to our Saviour. That it is emphatically, and in a peculiar Sense applied to him, may be seen

in confidering what is ascribed to him in the Gospel in Virtue of this Character: The Son of Man bath Power to forgive Sins, Matth. ix. 6. And in the Exposition of the Parable now before us, we read, the Son of Man shall send forth his Angels, and they shall gather out of his Kingdom, all Things that offend, and them which do Iniquity, and shall cast them into a Furnace of Fire, &c. Matth. xiii. 41, 42. The Son of Man shall sit on the Right Hand of the Power of God, Luke xxii. 69. And to mention but one Place more: God bath given bim Power to execute Judgment, because he is the Son of Man, John v. 27.

Can any of these Things be affirmed of any other Son of Man? Can every or any Son of Man forgive Sins? or judge the World? and yet this Judgment is committed to him, BECAUSE be is the Son of Man. Confidering him then as a Man, and yet entitled to be styled emphatically the Son of Man, what is there to distinguish him from all other Sons of Men? If he is indeed that Seed promised to the Woman, who was to bruise the Serpent's Head, through whom were to be established all the Expectations of Mercy and Judgment raifed by the an-

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tient Prophets; we see a plain Reason why he is styled the Son of Man, being that very Son foretold, on whom the Hopes of the World rested from the Beginning.

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As our Saviour, being the Seed of the Woman, is styled the Son of Man, so the Devil acting (as probably he did) under the Form of a Serpent, is for the same Reason flyled the Serpent; and wicked Spirits and Men are styled Serpents and Scorpions, and are characterized as Powers of the Enemy. The Tempter himself, the great Dragon, the old Serpent, is called the Devil and Satan who deceiveth the whole World, Rev. xii. 9. You see then, that the Contest between true Religion and Idolatry, between Righteousness and Wickedness, has from the Beginning been carried on by the Serpent and his Seed on one Side, and the Son of Man, the Seed of the Woman, on the other, agreeable to the antient Prophecy given after the As the Devil is called the Evil One, fo Christ is called the Just One. The Serpent under the Influence of the Evil One, and the Son of Man, have had perpetual Strife to condemn, or to fave the World.

It has been Matter of Doubt, as I observed before, whether the Tempter appeared to Eve

Eve in the Form of a Serpent, or not: but if we consider how great an Instrument of Idolatry the Serpent has been in all Times, it will add some Weight in Favour of their Opinion, who think that the Devil made Use of the Serpent in his first Deceit, as he has fince undoubtedly done in a thousand others in After-Times. I need not prove how great an Object of Idolatry the Serpent has been. It is well known what the Cafe was in Egypt, in the Eastern Country, in Greece and Rome, and elsewhere. This Species of Idolatry, however it came there, was found in America, upon the first Discovery of that Country. Garcilasco del' Viga, who wrote the History of the Incas of Peru, tells us, that the Spaniards, forcing into the Recess of one of their Temples, found there the Image of a great Dragon, placed as the Deity of the Temple, and the Object of religious Worship. Other Instances in abundance might be produced from modern as well as antient History.

When you reflect how extensive this kind of Idolatry has been, how it has spread over the whole World, you may judge perhaps that the first Prophecy has been more literally accomplished, than has been

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generally supposed; and that the old Serpent in his old Form with his Seed, and the Son of Man the Seed of the Woman, have been in perpetual Enmity, and will be, till the appointed Time comes for destroying the Power of the Evil One.

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But to return to the History of the Fall. In Opposition to what I said with regard to the Hopes given to Adam and his Posterity by the Sentence on the Serpent, it has been faid, that there is not the least Intimation of any Victory of Man over the Serpent. Now, if no Intimation of Advantage be given to Man over the Serpent in the literal Sense, there is no Ground to infer by Analogy any Advantage to the Man over the evil Being, the Tempter and Seducer. Let us then consider this. Naturalists are agreed that the Head of a Serpent is the tenderest Part, and that Wounds there, if they are such as bruise or break the Head, are incurable. Upon this Ground the Scripture, elsewhere representing great and evil Powers under the Image of Dragons and Serpents, relates or foretels their certain Ruin by the same Figure of bruifing or breaking their Heads. Thus

the Destruction of Pharaoh and his Host in the Red Sea, is described in these Terms: Thou breakest the Heads of the Dragons in the Waters, Pf. lxxiv. 13. A Man wounded in the Heel by a Serpent, may or may not die; for Nature has provided, and Experience has found out, fo many Remedies for this Evil, that few fo wounded perish, and those for want of Care and proper Application. True it is, that Serpents, as long as they are Serpents, will bite Men by the Heels, and Men will return the Evil on their Heads: Here is then a perpetual Enmity declared, but with unequal Success; on one Side Pains and Wounds, on the other Death and Destruction. Thus it is between Men and the Serpents of the Earth; and I am at a Loss to account for the Affertion, that here is not the least Intimation of any final Victory of the Man over the Serpent. Take this out of the Metaphor, and apply it to the Evil Being, the Tempter and Betrayer of our first Parents, and thus much at least appears to be intended: That Man, though greatly injured, and greatly to be injured by the Seducer's poisonous Infinuations, shall at the last prevail and destroy the Power and Tyranny of the wicked Spirit.

rit. Man shall suffer in the Contest, but for him there are Remedies prepared. The Evil One shall receive a Wound, a Wound that knows no Cure.

This Exposition will not necessarily lead us farther, nor shew us all the Circumstances of this Centest, nor the certain Means of Victory; but a little Reflection will open the View: And, fince all was loft by Difobedience to God, furely it is no far-fetched Consequence to infer, that nothing can be regained but through his Favour; unless there be one more mighty than he to rescue us out of his Hands. Is it then reconcileable to the Notion of God, to suppose that Sinners can recover his Favour by any other Means than those of Righteousness and Obedience? If not, then the Chain of Confequences deduced in the former Part of this Treatife must hold firm; and there is no Way to break through it, but by supposing the History of the Fall to be a mere Fiction of Antiquity, which was introduced by a Strength of Imagination in some early Age, and through a Weakness of Judgment has been believed and admitted in those which followed.

It is a material Enquiry, and connected to the History of the Fall, and affecting no less a Matter, than the Foundation of all Religion, to know upon what Ground we have Hope towards God.

That Hope towards God is a necessary Foundation of Religion, without which it cannot subsist, seems to be a Thing agreed.

The Question then is, whence these Hopes are derived? From Revelation and the Promises of God, say I; from natural Reason contemplating the Attributes of God, say others, who are of Opinion that the Attributes of God are a sufficient Foundation, from whence Man, poor weak Man, may learn to hope for certain Mercy from him.

I want not to be convinced that the prefent Condition of Mankind affords great Arguments for Pity and Compassion, and consequently good Grounds for Hope from the
Mercy of God. Whoever views Mankind
in their present State, into which they came
by no voluntary Act of their own, but placed in it by him who is their Maker, and
will be their Judge; subject to Ignorance
and Superstition by a kind of Necessity of
Birth and Education; surrounded with many natural Infirmities and Passions, arising
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from no Crime of which they are conscious; and at the same Time considers the Benignity of the divine Nature, and the Love of God towards his Creatures, of which the Affection of natural Parents is but a faint Resemblance, will easily see, that the Condition of Man pleads strongly for Mercy, that Nature with unutterable Groans calls for Help and Deliverance for her Children, and that there is great Reason to expect from the Goodness of God that he will not be deaf to these Cries.

This, I suppose, is meant when we are told, that "the Attributes of God are a just "Foundation from whence Man, poor weak "Man, may learn to hope for certain Mer"cy from him."

But what is this to the Case before us, or to the main Question concerning the Foundation of Religion; which had a Beginning before so much as one poor weak Man was born into the World, to plead the Misery of his Condition as a Motive for Mercy? At the time of the Fall there were but two in the World, and they both Sinners, without the Plea of Ignorance or natural Insirmity to excuse their Iniquity. They had incurred the Sentence of immediate Death, were

conscious that they deserved it, and had Reason every Moment to expect the Execution. Tell me now, upon what Ground they could conceive Hope: Could they plead the Misery of their Condition? If so, then every Sinner who renders himself miserable by his Iniquity, has a Title to Mercy. any Reasoning of theirs upon the Attributes of God give a just Foundation for Hope, against the express Declaration of God himfelf, In the Day thou eatest thereof thou shalt furely die?

Supposing these Sinners had died in their Sin, according to the Terms of the Law given them, what Complaint could have been formed on their Behalf? And where then would have been the Men, the poor weak Men, whose Condition affords such certain Grounds for Hope? None fuch would have come into the World. That there are fuch in the World now, is the Effect of God's Mercy to our first Parents; a Consequence of that Promise which first gave them Confidence towards God.

It is one thing to view the World in its present Circumstances; another to view it in its original. God would not have fuffered the World to have been filled with weak

weak miserable Creatures, had he not intended them for Objects of his Mercy. No Wonder therefore if they appear to be what he intended they should be. But Adam and Eve came not into the World in this miserable State, and therefore the original Hopes of Religion after the Fall, which are certainly as old as Adam, owe not their Rise to that Condition, in which he was no Sharer.

The not making this Distinction between the original Hopes of Nature, and the Hopes which may be derived from the prefent State of the World, has, I am perfuaded, been a great Prejudice in many Minds, as well against revealed Religion, as against those who defend it. Divines are thought to have no Sense, or no Bowels, when they call in Question the Foundation of those Hopes which Natural Reason conceives from a View of the Perfections of God, and the Imperfections of Man. Revelation is looked on as an Imposition, and Abridgment of our natural Right, when it offers that Mercy upon Terms and Conditions, to which Nature feems to lay so just a Claim upon her own Account.

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Yet neither does the Gospel, nor they that defend it, pretend to say, that Man in his present Condition is not an Object of Mercy. So far from it, that they affert that God permitted Men to come into this Condition, that they might be Objects of his Mercy, and for the clear Manifestation of his Goodness.

There is one Difficulty, which attends upon every Scheme of natural Religion, of which I think every confidering Man, who follows his Enquiries up to the Original of Things, must be sensible. The Case is this; the Religion and Morality, which Nature teaches, is fuch as Nature in the present weak Condition cannot perform. teaches us what is right; but alas! it wants no Proof to shew that the best of us fall short of this Perfection. Whence comes this Inconfistency, this Contradiction in Nature? Why had we not less Discernment to see what is right, or more Power to follow the Dictates of Reason? To mend this Matter, the Mercy of God is called in to the Affistance of Man's Weakness; and in good Truth there is Reason enough for it; this Help is not asked before it is wanted. as the Application to Mercy is in every Cafe

Case an After-game, and the very Call for Mercy and Pardon shews the original Duty and Obligation to have been transgressed; this Application to Mercy, however in our present Circumstances reasonable and necesfary, can be no Part of the original Religion of Nature, unless we are naturally and originally formed Offenders. No Subject wants the Prince's Mercy, till he has broken his Laws; and to suppose a Government in which every Subject should originally stand in need of the Prince's Mercy, is a Contradiction: For the very Supposition makes every Subject an Offender; and the suppofing him an Offender infers a Law antecedent to this supposed original State.

The Necessity therefore which every Man sees of supporting Religion in the present Circumstances of the World, by the Hopes of God's Mercy and Pardon, is the Voice of Nature concurring with the sacred History, to shew us that we are fallen from the State in which God first placed us. For nothing perfect in suggester is an Object of Pity and Compassion; and if the whole Race of Men, taken collectively, are in their present Circumstances, as every Scheme of Religion asserts they are, an Object of divine

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Compassion, they must be considered as impersect in suo genere, and consequently not in that State in which God created them, who made nothing in its kind impersect. The View of the World in its present Circumstances, surrounded with Ignorance, Folly, Wickedness, and Misery; and the Necessity of grounding the Hopes of all Religion on the Mercy of God, leads us plainly to the Preacher's Conclusion, Lo, this only have I found, That God hath made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions, Eccles. vii. 29.

Far am I then from thinking, that weak Man is not an Object of Mercy, or that there is not Mercy in store for him. I see too much, nay I feel too much, of the Infirmities of Nature, to read fo ill a Lesson against myself. But where were all those Pleas, when Adam finned? He was no poor weak Man, but created upright, and made poor and weak by his own Choice. From what Principle of Reason could he certainly conclude, that God would not execute the Sentence of Death upon him immediately? All that we read of him is, that, conscious of his Guilt, he bid himself from the Presence of the Lord God amongst the Trees of the Garden, hoping (as there is nothing more irra-

irrational than Fear) to escape the All-seeing Eye of his Maker. In this State, what Comfort could he have but from the Promise of God? And indeed, were it not for a just Expectation from the Promises of God, that all the Miseries and Confusions in the World shall finally end to the Glory of God, and the Good of those who continue with Patience in well-doing, it had been far greater Mercy to have put an End to two wretched Lives, than to continue them for the Propagation of Wickedness and Misery to a thousand Generations. Through Mercy then, and for the Sake of shewing Mercy, does the present World subsist; and the Origin of this Mercy must be traced from an higher Principle, than the present Weakness and Misery of human Nature. I have faid, " It was necessary to con-" vey Hope to Adam to be the Foundation " of Religion, and that Hope was convey-" ed when Sentence was paffed upon the "Offenders." I am answered, No; the Necessity of revealing Hopes of Mercy is plainly not complied with; and no Hopes of Mercy, or even Colour for fuch Hopes, are contained in this Transaction.

For these Assertions no Reasons are given, but what are found in a mere literal Interpretaconsidered: And it seems to me, that it does not upon that Scheme do Justice to the Text; for it makes no Difference between a Bruise on the Heel and a Bruise on the Head. But this also has been considered.

It may feem strange perhaps to some, that we should imagine any Bleffing at all to be contained in this Proceeding, which is plainly a judicial Proceeding against Offenders, and where nothing but their Punishment is to be expected. Stranger still, that we should search for this Blessing upon the Man, not in the Part in which he himself was principally concerned, but in the Part which was directed to the Serpent, and contains God's Curse against him for his Deceit. A severe Sentence against one Offender is feldom intended to be a Pardon to another: And to this Difficulty the Interpretation is fubject, which draws the Blessing upon Man from the Curse upon the Serpent.

To clear this, let it be considered,

I. Though a Sentence formed upon the Rigour of the Law contains no Mercy, yet every Sentence which exacts less than the Law demands, is to some Degree an Act of Grace. A Sentence of Fine and Imprisonment,

ment, against a Man guilty of Death, though it be directly a judicial Proceeding against an Offender, and in itself a Sentence of Punishment, yet is it virtually a Pardon for Life. There have been Instances (perhaps too many) where a Verdict against a Criminal for Man-slaughter, has been in Effect a Pardon for Murder.

Now in the principal Case, the Law was, In the Day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. By the Sentence on Adam his Death was respited, and he was to live to eat (though to eat in Sorrow) of the Fruits of the Ground. By the Sentence on Eve, she was to live to bring forth Children, though the Sorrows of Conception were multiplied. By the Sentence on the Serpent, a perpetual Enmity was declared between his and the Woman's Seed, and the Event on each Side foretold: It shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel.

Could Adam, comparing his present Case upon the Foot of these Sentences with the Penalty of the Law against which he had offended, possibly doubt whether God had dealt graciously with him? No more, surely, than a Criminal doomed to live in Imprisonment, when he might have been hang-

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ed by the Law, can doubt of his Prince's Goodness to him.

2. As to our supposing a Bleffing upon the Man to be contained in the Curse on the Serpent, this is to be faid: That the Paffage we refer to has undeniably a Relation both to the Woman and the Serpent, and might have been declared (for aught that appears from the Subject Matter) as well to one as the other. Now had it been faid to the Woman, instead of the Serpent, I will put Enmity, &c. It shall bruise thy Heel, and thou shalt bruise his Head, there had been no Ground for this Objection; and I cannot conceive that the Words carry any other Sense by being spoken to the Serpent, than they would have had, supposing them to have been spoken to the Woman.

There is a like Instance in the Sentence on the Woman. It is the Prerogative of the Man, that he is Head of the Woman; but this Superiority is not conveyed to him by express Grant or Concession, but the Subjection is laid on the Woman as a Penalty.

And indeed, whenever a Punishment affects a Man in the Relation he bears to others, the Case must ever be, as it is here suppo-

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fed to be. When Canaan was curfed with Servitude, in Consequence of that Curse, his Brethren became Lords over him. When Reuben for his Iniquity lost his Birthright, the Advantage necessarily went to some other of the Sons of Jacob. And fince the Woman and the Serpent were declared to be Enemies, the Destruction of the Serpent must necessarily be the Exaltation of the Woman. And fince these Words, declaring a perpetual Enmity and Contest between the Woman and the Serpent, are made Part of the Sentence on the Serpent, it is a clear Indication that the Serpent was to fuffer most in the Struggle, otherwise they could not stand as Part of his Curse. For the same Reason the Man's Superiority over the Woman is left to be collected from the Penalty on the Woman. A Grant of this Superiority would have come very improperly in as Part of a Sentence against the Man; but the Subjection on the other Side came properly as Part of the Sentence against the Woman. Thus then the Case stands: The Enmity between the Serpent and the Woman was a Curse on the Serpent, and not on the Woman, and therefore the Advantage of the Contest was necessarily to be on the Woman's

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man's Side. So that this Circumstance, duly considered, is a great Confirmation of the Hopes we ground from the Curse laid on the Serpent.

Power over Man but by drawing him into Evil, bruifing the Heel seems plainly to intimate to us the Progress of Idolatry and Wickedness in the World, which are the Engines of the Wicked One to keep Mankind in Subjection, Slavery, and Misery. And as his chief and main Strength consists in these, the bruifing his Head intimates to us, that these shall be destroyed, and the Power of the Devil over Mankind together with them, by the Seed of the Woman.

There is another Prophecy of antient Date, so like to this in Language and Idea, and into which the Hope of Salvation has so plain Relation, that comparing the two together may perhaps reflect a new Light upon each. The Prophecy intended is to be sound in the xlixth of Genesis, among the Blessings and Predictions of Jacob given to his Sons just before his Death, and relates to the Tribe of Dan. Dan shall be a Serpent by the Way, an Adder in the Path, that bitath the Horses Heels, so that his Rider

der Shall fall backward. I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord! The Difficulty here, at least the main Difficulty, is to give any tolerable Account of the Propriety of this paffionate Wish for Salvation. has evidently Relation to the Prophecy concerning Dan, and the Exposition ought to shew and preserve the Relation; and yet, according to the common Interpretations, this Passage might as well stand after the Bleffing of Gad, Asher, Naphthali, or any other of the Tribes, as after this Prophecy concerning the Tribe of Dan. They who refer the Salvation here mentioned to the Deliverance wrought by Samson descended from the House of Dan, do also expound the Prophecy to relate to him, and his Victory; fo far judging right, that the Prophecy and the Epiphonema ought to terminate in the fame Point of View. But how comes Samson to be thus distinguished? Israel had many other Judges and Deliverers descended from other Tribes, many of them, in all Respects, (bodily Strength only excepted) preferable to this strong Danite; of them there is no Notice taken in the Prophecy of Jacob, nor of the Salvation which God by their Means wrought in Ifrael. Besides, in what

what Sense had Jacob waited for this Salvation? And how for this rather than for twenty others of the fame Kind which happened to his Pofterity? The Words plainly imply him to speak of something which had been long the Object of his Heart's Defire; the Thought of which came strong upon him when he prophetically beheld the Fortune of this Tribe. Further, the Images here used, of Serpent and Adder, are odious, and very improper to describe a brave or gallant Man in any Circumstance of Life; nor are they, as I remember, ever fo used in the facred Writers. It cannot be reasonable therefore to look for the Accomplishment of this Prophecy among the Actions of the Tribe of Dan deserving Honour and Praise; for the Ideas by which the Prediction is conveyed, point out Actions of another Kind; and lead us to expect, in the History of this Tribe, an Account of some very dishonourable and perfidious Transaction. The History will justify this Expectation. though the House of Israel stands recorded for a wilful and disobedient People, whose Heart was not right with their God, yet it is the peculiar Infamy of the House of Dan, to be the Ringleaders in Idolatry, the

the first who erected publickly a molten Image in the Land of Promise, and by their Example and Perseverance in this Iniquity infected all the Tribes of Israel. This Idolatry began soon after the Days of Joshua, and continued until the Day of the Captivity of the Land, Judges xviii. 30, 31 \*.

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Supposing this to be the View before the Prophet's Eyes, in what Terms more proper could he describe this new Tempter and Seducer, than by those which were commonly used to describe the first? If the first Tempter deserved the Name of a Serpent, for drawing Adam and Eve from their Obedience to the original Law, in Virtue of which they held the Possession of Paradife, did Dan deserve it less for drawing the People of Israel from Obedience to the divine Law, in Virtue of which they had but even then taken Possession of the Land of Promise? If the Mischies brought upon the Race of Adam, were justly represented by the Serpent's bruifing the Heel of the Woman's Seed, did not the Mischiefs brought upon the House of Israel, by the Idolatry of Dan, well deserve to be painted in Colours of the same kind? And when Jacob

<sup>\*</sup> Compare with Bishop Ufber's Annals.

faw, that the Venom of the old Serpent was not yet fpent, but that it would work again in one of his own Sons, to the utter Ruin of his Posterity, could he help looking back upon God's Promise of Deliverance, and the Hope given that the Serpent's Head should be bruised? Could this View, and this Resection together, be attended with any other Sentiments than those which close this Prophecy? I bave waited for thy Salvation, O Lord!

This Prophecy, considered in this Light, affords a very antient Evidence of the Expectation of Deliverance from the Curse of the Fall. The Hope of Salvation here manifestly relates to the Mischief wrought by a Serpent biting the Heels. And tho this Image is used to foretel a Mischief then to come, and tho the Salvation itself was still to come, yet the Hope was older than Jacob, bad been his Comfort all along, and was his Comfort under the salvation in the salvation itself was still to come, yet the Hope was older than Jacob, bad been his Comfort all along, and was his Comfort under the salvation.

Lay these Circumstances together, and it is impossible to imagine any Salvation that can answer to these Ideas, but that only which arose from the Promise, that the

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ne ed This Expectation, so earnestly and so warmly expressed by the old Patriarch, led some Interpreters to apply it to the Hopes of Salvation thro' the Messias, as the only Object of Worth and Dignity sufficient to engage his last Thoughts, and to be the Comfort and Support of his last Hour; though they did not consider the Prophecy itself as leading to this Hope, but referred it to a temporal Deliverance, to be brought about by one of the Sons of Dan\*.

But that this Prophecy was antiently understood to fix a Mark of Infamy upon Dan, and not to fing the Triumph of the Tribe, appears by an old Tradition grounded on this Prophecy, that Anti-Christ should proceed from the Tribe of Dan +. For which Opinion, what other Ground could there be, but this, that the Terms in which Dan is described, are the very same made Use of

<sup>\*</sup> Adest huic expositioni Thargum Hierosolymitanum—Dixit Pater noster Jacob. — Expecto redemptionem Messa Filii David, qui venturus est ut adducat sibi Filios Israel, cujus redemptionem expectat et desiderat Anima mea. Eademque habentur in Paraphrasi Chaldaica Editionis Complutensis. Pererius in locum.

<sup>†</sup> See Calmer's Dictionary under the Title DAN.

in describing the Tempter, that first and great Anti-Christ who was to have perpetual Enmity with the Seed of the Woman, and to wage continual War with the Saints, and often to prevail to the bruising their Heel.

Some Intimation of this Sort feems to be the Revelation of St. John, One would think that Dan Ch. vii. was rejected and accounted as the Seed of the Serpent, by the leaving all of this Tribe out of the Number of those who were fealed with the Seal of the living God. It feems to be the original Purpose of Providence to settle the House of Ifrael under twelve Heads, and yet Levi had no Share of the Inheritance in the Land of Canaan, as the other Tribes had, God having provided another Maintenance for him; Numb. xviii. 14. Josh. xiv. 3. and xiii. 33. nor had Dan, in the Revelation of St. John, any Share allotted him in the Kingdom of the Messias. In both Cases the two Tribes of the House of Joseph are admitted to compleat the Number: So that in the temporal Covenant made with Abraham, which gave him the Inheritance of the Land of Canaan, Levi had no Share; in the Promife,

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to be accomplished through him in whom all the Nations of the Earth were to be blessed, Dan had no Share, It is remarkable, that Jacob in blessing the Sons of Joseph adopts them to be his own Sons, and constitutes them Heads of distinct Tribes, Gen. xlviii. 16. by which Means the Tribes of Israel should have been thirteen; but, as the Case happened, this Substitution did only keep up the Number to twelve. These Things did not happen by Chance; but I pretend not to account for this Disposition of Providence.

That the Language of the first Prophecy, representing the Victory of the Woman's Seed by bruising the Serpent's Head, has been continued in later Prophecies, has appeared already; hence we read of Power given over Serpents and Scorpions, of treading upon the Adder, and of trampling the Dragon under Feet. Now the known Use of this Language in Scripture, and the Application of it to the promised Seed, will help us to account for one of the Arts made use of by the Tempter, when he made his Trial on our Saviour.

The Tempter plainly wanted to know whether Jesus was the Son of God, that Person expected to come, and with whom

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he well knew what Concern he had. In order to know this, he tries whether our Lord would own the Character, by affuming the Power belonging to it. If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, He shall give his Angels Charge concerning thee, and in their Hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy Foot against a Stone. The Words are taken from the xcift Pfalm, ver. 11 and 12. These Words, considered in themselves, contain in figurative Language a Promise of God's Providence and Care over that Perfon to whom they are addressed; and might be applied with great Propriety to David himself, or to any other good Person specially regarded by God. How came the Tempter then to consider these Words as belonging only to him, who was to be the Son of God? From the Words themselves he could not collect this, but there was another Character in the very next Verse, and belonging to the fame Person, which he could not mistake; for this Person, over whom the Angels were to have Charge, was to tread upon the Lion \* and Adder, and the young Lion and the Dragon to trample

The Word translated Lion, fignifies, in the Opinion of Bochart, a kind of Serpent.

under Feet. He knew by this Mark to whom this whole Prophecy belonged; he could not forget who was to bruise his Head; and though he avoided to ask our Lord directly, whether he was that Person who was to bruise bis Head; yet he did the same thing covertly, by trying whether another Part of the same Prophecy would be owned by him, as belonging to himself. If trampling the Lion and the Adder, and the Dragon under Feet, had meant no more than that the Sons of Adam and Eve should now and then destroy the Serpents of the Field, the Tempter would have had no reason to suppose that he, who was to trample on the Dragon, was to be the Son of God.

If we look into the World, where Sin and Death feem to rule with absolute Dominion, and appear in all the Forms of Violence, Fraud, and Iniquity, in Distempers without Number, and in Miseries too many, too affecting to be described; we shall want no other Proof of the Completion of the first Part of the Prophecy of the Fall. The Heel of the Seed of the Woman has been, and will continue to be fufficiently bruifed till Death, the last Enemy, shall be destroyed. On the other Side, the Children of the Kingdom have been redeemed by the Blood of

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of Christ, and are training up under the many Trials that furround them, by the Affistance of God's holy Spirit, to be Heirs of Glory and Immortality. And the Time will come, when the Son of Man will come forth conquering and to conquer, and shall appear in full Power, and in the Glory of the Father, to subdue all his Enemies. Then shall the Dragon, that old Serpent which is the Devil and Satan, be fast bound, and cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone; and the Judgments of God denounced against the Wickedness of Men having their Completion, every Curfe shall cease \*: Then shall the Loss of the Fall be repaired, Paradise be restored, and the Tree of Life shall yield her Fruit again, and the Leaves thereof shall be for the Healing of the Nations.

<sup>\*</sup> καὶ τανανάθεμα ἐκ ἔςαι ἔτι. The rendering in our Translation is, And there shall be no more Curse; as if the Words contained an Assurance against any new Curse. But the true Meaning is, that every Curse should cease; that the Curse of the Fall which had been working in all Generations, and all others brought upon the Earth should be utterly extinguished, in Consequence of the entire Defeat of the old Serpent, and the Victory of the Son of Man.

# **CHARTER**

# DISSERTATION III.

The Blessing of Judah, Gen. xlix.

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HEN Jacob drew near his End he called his Sons together, and bleffed them, every one according to his Bleffing , benedictionibus suis propriis +;

i. e. giving to each a peculiar Bleffing. The Part relating to Judab stands thus:

Ver. 8. Judab, thou art he whom thy Brethren shall praise; thy Hand shall be in the Neck of thine Enemies: Thy Father's Children shall how down before thee.

Ver. 9. Judab is a Lion's Whelp; from the Prey, my Son, thou art gone up: He stooped down, he couched as a Lion, and as an old Lion; who shall rouse him up?

\* Gen. xlix. 28. † Vulg. X 4 Ver. 10.

Ver. 10. The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the People be.

Ver. 11. Binding his Fole unto the Vine, and his Asses Colt unto the choice Vine; he washed his Garments in Wine, and his Clothes in the Blood of Grapes.

There is no Prophecy in the Old Testament, that has undergone so many Interpretations, and critical Disquisitions, as this now before us. It would make a Volume to report exactly the various Sentiments of learned Men upon this Subject. They who desire to be acquainted with them, may consult Huetius\*, Mr. Le Clerc+, and Mr. Saurin‡.

It may be thought perhaps great Presumption to attempt any thing upon this Passage, after so much Pains bestowed on it by Men of great Figure in Learning; but as I have no Intention to make Shew of much Learning, or much Reading, but only to offer a plain natural Sense of the most important Passage in this Prophecy, which seems to me to arise

<sup>\*</sup> Demonstratio Evangelica, Cap. iv. Prop. 9.

<sup>+</sup> Comment. in locum.

Discours. Historiques, &c. Dife. 41.

from the very State and Circumstances of Things, at the Time this Prophecy was delivered, I hope it will not be thought the

Effect of Vanity or Oftentation.

There is a Paffage in the Book Ecclefiafticus which will ferve as a Key to open to us the Nature of the Bleffings bestowed on the Twelve Tribes by their Father Jacob. This Author, the Son of Sirach, observes, That God gave this Covenant to Abraham, eftablished it with Isaac, and made it rest upon the Head of facob \*. Thus far the intire Bleffing, and all the Parts of it, vested in fingle Perfons only: But in the next Step there is an Alteration; for God divided 'facob's Portions, among the Twelve Tribes did be part them +. There is no Question, but that this Passage relates to the Settlement and the Blessing of the Tribes by Jacob, in the xlviiith and xlixth of Genesis; and it shews us, that the feveral Bleffings given to the several Tribes are but Parts or Portions of the Bleffings which Jacob received from Isaac; Isaac from Abraham; and Abrabam immediately from God. In this View then the feveral Bleffings, mentioned in the xlixth of Genefis, and limited to the several

<sup>\*</sup> Ecclus xliv. 19, &c. + Ver. 23.

Tribes, must be considered as an Exposition of the original Blessing given to Abrabam; and the Blessing from which the others are derived, must limit and determine the Sense of the Particulars; which cannot be extended beyond the Bounds of the first Promise.

Setting afide the Authority of the Son of Sirach, 'tis reasonable to think that this was the Case, from the Custom and Practice in Abrabam's Family, in which the Bleffing of the Father was regularly conveyed to the Son. And when we fee Jacob bleffing all his Children, what can we suppose else, but that he is transmitting to his Posterity the Bleffing which he himself received? If we look to the Beginning of the xlviiith of Genefis, where Jacob adopts Ephraim and Manasseth, the two Sons of Joseph, and constitutes them Heads of Tribes in his Family, and confequently entitles them to a Share, among his own Sons, of the Land of Canaan, there will be no room to doubt of this Matter. For Jacob founds his Right of allotting the Land of Canaan, in the manner he does, upon God's Grant of that Land to himself. Jacob faid unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the Land of Canaan, and bleffed me, and faid unto

unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a Multitude of People, and will give this Land to thy Seed after thee for an everlasting Possession. And now thy two Sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the Land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine: As Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine, ver. 3, 4, 5.

Jacob prefaces his Grant to Joseph's Family, with a Recital only of God's Promise to make him fruitful, and to give the Land of Canaan to him and his Seed; for his Gift to Joseph's Family went not beyond the

Terms of this Grant.

But the Bleffing of Abraham, derived to his Chosen, confisted of two Parts; the Promise of the Land of Canaan, and the Promise of that Son, in whom all the Nations of the Earth were to be blessed. These two Promises went inseparably together from the Beginning, and we shall find they continued in some degree to do so to the End.

Let us see now in what Terms these two

Promises are conveyed.

t

The Land of Canaan The bleffed Seed to to Abraham.

Abraham.

The Lord appeared Thou shalt be a Blefunto Y sing

unto Abraham, and fing, and I will bless faid, Unto thy Seed will them that bless thee, Igive this Land, Gen. xii. 7.

Lift up now thine Eyes, and look from the Place where thou art Northward, and Southward, and Eastward, and Westward, for all the Land which thou seeft, to thee will I give it, and to thy Seed for ever; and I will make thy Seed as the Dust of the Earth, Gen. xiii. 14, &c.

and curse bim that curseth thee : And in thee shall all Families of the Earth be bleffed, Gen. xii. 2, 3.

Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty Nation; and all the Nations of the Earth Shall be bleffed in him, Gen. xviii. 18.

To Isaac.

Unto thee, and unto thy Seed, I will give all these Countries, -and I will make thy Seed to multiply as the Stars of Heaven, Gen. xxvi. 3, 4.

To Isaac.

And in thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be bleffed, Gen. xxvi. 4.

To Jacob.

To Jacob.

God give thee of the Dew of Heaven, and the Fatness of the Earth and Plenty of Corn and Wine, Gen. xxvii. 28.

The Elder Shall ferve the Younger, Gen. xxv. 23. Let the People Serve thee, and Nations bow down to thee : Be Lord over thy Brethren, and let thy Mother's Son bow down to thee: Curfed be every one that curfeth thee. and bleffed be be that bleffetbtbee, Gen.xxvii. 29.

With Corn and Wine bave I sustained bim, Gen, xxvii. 37.

The second rest for

Se. Con. Mix. 1 5.

The Land whereon thou lieft, to thee will I give it, and to thy Seed. And thy Seed Shall be as the Dust of the Earth; and thou Shalt spread abroad to the West, and to the Alier A suctions Mestil East, and to the North, and to the South, Gen. All was all some

xxviii. 13, 14.

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Behold I bave made bim thy Lord, and all bis Brethren bave I given to him for Servants, Gen. xxvii. 37.

In thee and in thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be bleffed, Gen. xxviii. 14.

Saldbinent, of this

And not the a nevue

To the Tribe of Judah.

Judah is a Lion's Whelp; from the Prey, my Son, thou art gone up: He stooped down, be couched as a Lion, and as an old Lion; who shall rouse himup? The Sceptre shall not departfrom Judab, nor a Lawgiver from between bis Feet, until Shilob come, and unto bim shall the gathering of the People be, binding bis Fole unto the Vine, &c. Gen. xlix. 9, 10, 11.

To the Tribe of Judab.

Judah, thou art be whom thy Brethren shall praise; thy Hand shall be in the Neck of thine Enemies: Thy Father's Children shall how down before thee, Gen. xlix. 8.

Until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the People be, Gen. xlix. 10.

as the Conveyance of the Promise of the blessed to the Tribe of Judab, be not admitted in that Sense, there are no others, relating to this, or any of the other Tribes, which make any Mention, much less any Settlement, of this Part of Jacob's Blessing. And yet there never was any Doubt, either in the antient Jewish Church before Christ, or among the Jews since the Time of Christ, but

but that the Promise of the Messiab was limited to the Tribe of Judab in this Bleffing; nor is it reasonable to imagine, that Jacob in dividing his Bleffing among his Posterity, should forget the chief and principal Part, which had been with fo much Solemnity conveyed from Abraham, through Isaac, to himself. Besides, the Expression here used, Thou art be whom thy Brethren shall praise, is equivalent to what was faid to Abraham, Thou shalt be a Blessing; and to what was faid to facob, Bleffed be be that bleffeth thee, and must consequently mean the same thing. But of this Part I have already treated in the foregoing Discourses, and will not burden the Reader and myself with Repetitions.

The Promise of the blessed Seed could not be divided, for a Man can descend but from one Tribe; a Son can be born but of one Father; and therefore this Part of Jacob's Blessing went entire to the Tribe of Judab. All the other Tribes have their special Blessing assigned them out of the promised Land; and Interpreters need not be concerned, as some of them are, to find wherein the peculiar Blessing of some of the Sons of Jacob, to whom, or of whom, very little is said, does consist; for the making them Heads of Tribes conveyed to them a Right

Right to share in the Land of Canaan, and in that their Blessing consisted, and by that they received a Portion of the Blessing of their Father.

The Promise to Abraham, of multiplying bis Seed, and giving them the Land of Canaan for a Possession, implied necessarily a Promise of temporal Power and Dominion. For a People cannot possess a Land without fome Form, or Rule of Government among them. All the Promises therefore of a numerous Issue, of Strength and Courage in fubduing Enemies, and the like, are incident to the Promise of the Land of Canaan, and must be referred to it. Thus when we hear the Character of Judah; Judah is a Lion's Whelp; from the Prey, my Son, thou art gone up: He stooped down and couched as a Lion, and as an old Lion; who shall rouse bim? To what else can we apply these Images of Courage and Bravery, but to the martial Disposition of the Tribe of Judah? and to their Victories obtained over the antient Possessor of the Land of Canaan? In like manner all the Promises of Plenty are Part of the Promise which God gave to Abraham and his Posterity, of a Land flowing with Milk and Honey. Of Judah 'tis faid-Binding his Foal unto the Vine, and bis

his Asses Colt unto the choice Vine: be washed his Garments in Wine, and his Clothes in the Blood of Grapes. His Eyes shall be red with Wine, and his Teeth white with Milk. This is a Portion of Jacob's Blessing; and can it naturally be deduced from any Part of the Blessing bestowed on him by his Father, but this only? God give thee of the Dew of Heaven, and the Fatness of the Earth, and Plenty of Corn and Wine, Gen. xxvii. 28.

There remains still to be accounted for, the Passage relating to the Sceptre of Judab:

The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet, until Shilob come; and unto him shall the gathering of the People be.

The Promise to Abraham was, that he should be the Father of many Nations, Gen. xvii. 5. and of Sarah it is said, She shall be a Mother of Nations, Kings of People shall be of her, Gen. xvii. 16. To Jacob it is said, God multiply thee, that thou mayest be a Multitude of People, Gen. xxviii. 3. The Succession in the House of Abraham was preferved in single Persons till Jacob's Time; he is the first who had a numerous Issue, and all of them entitled to the Promises

made to their Forefathers. The Sons of Facob lived with him, as Children of his Family only, till his going into Egypt; for when the Account is given of their Removal to Egypt, they are reckoned not as Heads of Tribes, but as so many Persons only, belonging to the Family of Jacob: All the Souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his Loins, befides Facob's Sons Wives, all the Souls were threescore and fix, Gen. xlvi. 26. to which Jacob, and Joseph, and his two Sons, born in Egypt, being added, 'tis faid, All the Souls of the House of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten, y, 27. Hitherto there is no mention of any Tribe, or of any House, but the House of Jacob. This State of Things continued during the Seventeen Years of Jacob's Life in Egypt, in all which Time there is no Appearance of any Power or Authority in any Rulers, or Elders, or Heads of Tribes, but in Jacob only. And how should there, before any Tribes were appointed, or any Form of Government was settled? When Jacob drew near his End, he fummoned all his Family, in order to appoint the Form of Government which should take place after his Death, and continue as long as his Posterity held Possession of the Land

Land of Canaan. The xlixth Chapter of Genefis is commonly called, Jacob's Bleffing of bis Sons; but it might as well be called, Jacob's Appointment of twelve Rulers or Princes to govern the House of Israel. For tell me, how came this Form of Government, by a Distribution of the People into twelve Tribes, with Heads and Rulers over them, to be pitched upon rather than any other? There is no Designation of this Form of Government in any other Place of Scripture; and it could not be fettled tacitly, by a mere Devolution of Jacob's Power among his Sons after his Decease; for had that been the Case, Ephraim and Manasseb could not have been Heads of Tribes, for their Father Joseph was living, and he must have been Head of one Tribe, as the rest of his Brethren were. Nor is it to be imagined, that fo confiderable a Part of the Story, as the founding and fettling the Government of Israel, should be passed over by Moses in Silence; and his Reader left to supply by Imagination fo material a Part of the History. It must therefore be allowed, that the Government of Ifrael is fettled by Jacob in the xlviiith and xlixth of Genefis.

All the Circumstances reported in these two Chapters answer to this Idea. In the first

first place Jacob gives the Birthright, as to the temporal Inheritance, to Joseph, by giving him a double Portion, and raifing out of his Family two Princes, or Heads of Tribes, in Ifrael: Ephraim and Manasseb are mine: As Reuben and Simeon they Shall be mine, Gen. xlviii. 5. And because other Issue from Toleph would have stood upon a Level in Point of Descent with Ephraim and Manoffeb, and it might have been doubtful whether they might not claim to be Rulers themfelves, and equal to their Brothers, Jacob directs that they should be reckoned in the Tribes of their two Brothers, They shall be called after the Name of their Brethren in their Inheritance & 6. By this Defignation of Jacob, the two Sons of Joseph were appointed, each to be the Head of a separate People; for this Jacob, speaking of these two Grandchildren, declares, He, Manasseb, shall become a People, and he also shall be great: But his Brother Ephraim shall be greater than be, and his Seed shall become a Multitude of Nations, & 19. In the following Chapter Jacob speaks to his Sons as the Representatives of fo many distinct People; which is expresly remarked by Moses, All thefe are the Twelve Tribes of Ifrael, Gen. xlix, 28, and it is evident likewise from hence,

hence, that the Things foretold and ascribed to them, are by no means capable of being understood of fingle Persons. Here the Promise to Abraham, That he should be Father of many Nations; and to Sarah, That Kings of People should be of her, began to take Effect; for from this time forward the People of Ifrael are reckoned by their Tribes, which were fo many distinct People, or (in the Language of the Book of Genesis) Nations, independent of each other, and subfisting under Rulers and Judges of their own, but confederated for mutual Defence, and the Maintenance of one Law to be given equally to all. It ought to be no Wonder to hear the Tribes of Israel called Nations, and their Heads Princes; for the same Language is used of Ishmael's Twelve Sons: --- These are the Sons of Ishmael, and these are their Names by their Towns, and by their Castles; Twelve Princes according to their Nations, Gen. xxv. 16. These Princes could be no more than Heads of Tribes +; and fuch Princes likewise were the Dukes, and the Kings of Edom \*. Ishmael was the Son of Abraham, and Esau was Son of Isaac; and their Families could not be

† Vide Clericum in locum.

<sup>\*</sup>Gen, xxxvi. Vide Clericum ad versum decimum quinum.

much more numerous than Jacob's, and yet they are reckoned, according to their Princes, and their Dukes, and by their feveral Nations. In truth, all the Governments of the East seem at this Time to have been of this fort. What were the four Kings, think you, whom Abraham overthrew with Three Hundred and Eighteen of his own Servants, and the Affistance of his three Friends, who might perhaps make as many more? What were the thirty-two Kings, whose Country was divided among the Twelve Tribes? The Princes of the Tribes of Israel were surely equal in Power and Dignity to fuch Kings; and fuch were the Kings of those Days. This Observation will teach us to restrain and limit our Ideas within due Bounds, when we read of Kings, and Princes, and Sceptres, and Judges, and Nations, in these early Times: and not to imagine, because the Words are the same which we now use, that they must necessarily fignify as high Degrees of Power as now they do.

What kind of Power Jacob settled upon these Heads of Tribes, may appear from what he himself says of Dan; Dan shall judge his People, as one of the Tribes of Israel, Gen. xlix. 16. All the People of Israel were not Dan's People, and therefore it

is absurd to imagine any Power given to Dan, or any of his Descendents, over the whole House of Jacob. Besides, nothing peculiar is given to Dan in this Grant; he was to judge bis own People indeed; but how? Why, as one of the Tribes of Israel. From whence it is evident, that every Tribe had its own Princes and Judges; and that every Prince, or Head of a Tribe, judged his own People; consequently every Tribe had a Sceptre, and a Lawgiver, as well as the Tribe of Judab.

That this Power in the Heads of Tribes took place immediately upon the Death of Jacob, may be collected from hence, that from this Time all Applications and Meffages are not to the People, but to the Elders of Ifrael, Exod. iii. 16. xii. 21. The Command of God fent to the House of Jacob, and the Children of Israel, in Egypt, was delivered by Moses to the Elders of the People, Exod. xix. 3, 7. The People and their Rulers are distinguished plainly in Exod. xxxiv. 31, 32. Aaron and all the Rulers of the Congregation returned unto him, and Moses talked with them. And afterwards all the Children of Israel came nigh.

<sup>†</sup> Quia penes ejus sobolem in communi politia pars gubernationis & imperii erit, ut tribus issa caput unum efficiat. Vatablus in locum.

The Government in the several Tribes of Israel was not monarchical, but aristocratical, as appears by comparing these Passages, Exod. vi. 14. Numb. xxxiv. 18. Josh. xxii. 14. and that no one Tribe had a Superiority over another, is plain upon the Death of Joshua: for then the People enquire of God, who should go up for them against the Canaanites? Judges i. 1. A Question that would not have been asked, had any one Tribe, or Ruler of one Tribe, had the Right of leading and governing the rest. When the Children of Benjamin were guilty in the Matter of the Levite's Concubine, no one Tribe, or Ruler of one Tribe, pretends to call them to account for it; but all the Tribes of Ifrael jointly fend to expostulate with them, and to demand Justice; and upon Refusal of Justice, Recourse is had to Arms immediately. What Authority the Princes of Tribes had among their own People, may be collected from the Song of Deborab, where they are described, as Governors in Israel, riding on white Asses, and sitting in Judgment, Judges v. 9, 10. And it is with Allusion to this Form of Government, that our Saviour promises his Disciples, that they shall fit on twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Ifrael, Matth. xix. 28.

Having

Having now feen the Constitution of the Tribes of Ifrael, and the Powers and Authorities incident to a Tribe, as fuch, we may look back to the Prophecy, and try whether this Light will direct us in the Exposition of it. Jacob having fettled twelve Princes, or Rulers of People, in his House, summons them together to hear what should befal them in the last Days; he speaks to them, as Heads of People, and not as fingle Persons, and what he fays relates to them, and their People collectively, and not to them personally. Since then he speaks to all as Princes, and tells Judah in particular, that the SCEPTRE should not depart from HIM until Shilob came, what can we understand by the Sceptre in this Place, but that very Power, and Right of Government, now settled and established in the House of Judab, and in all the other Tribes, and which Jacob foresaw would depart from the other Tribes long before the coming of Shiloh, but would remain with Judab until Sbilob came? The Promise to Judab, that his Sceptre should not depart, amounts to a Declaration that the Sceptres of the other Tribes should depart, and plainly shews that the Sceptre was not a Thing peculiar to Judab; for the Promife here to Judah is not, that he should bave a Sceptre,

Sceptre, which none of his Brethren had, or were to have; but that his Sceptre should continue longer with him than his Brothers Sceptres should continue with them.

Most of the Interpreters whom I have consulted, take it for granted, and it is the common Notion, that the Thing here promised to Judab is the Sceptre; and that the SCEPTRE was not to be settled in Judab's Family till some Ages after the Death of faceb: Which last Observation is grounded upon Jacob's Words - That I may tell you that which shall befal you in the last Days. But the first of these Observations has no Ground in the Text; nay, rather, is absolutely inconfistent with it. The antient Verfions all agree in one Sense, the same which our English Version has expressed, The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah. Do not these World suppose the Sceptre to be already in the Hand of Judah? Is there any Sense in saying that a Thing shall not depart which never yet was in Possession? The Prophecy is not a Grant of the Sceptre, but a Confirmation of it; now a Confirmation of Nothing is Nothing, and to make it Something, the Poffession of the Thing confirmed must be supposed. I know not by what Rules of Language or Grammar these Words can be confrued

strued into a Grant of the Sceptre; and tho' so many Writers and Interpreters have sollowed this Sense, yet I do not remember to have seen one Passage or parallel Expression from the Scripture, or any other Author, produced to justify the Interpretation. Yet surely it is no usual way of speaking, to say, Your Sceptre shall not depart, when the Speech is directed to one who has no Sceptre, nor is to have one for many Ages.

The fecond Observation, when rightly applied, is right; and if the Continuance of the Sceptre of Judab be, as I suppose, the Thing foretold; it extends to the very last Days of the Jewish State; and in this re-

spect the Interpretation is justified.

Another Thing supposed by most Interpreters is, that the Sceptre here mentioned is an Emblem of Dominion over all the Tribes of Jacob. But how can that be? Had not Jacob settled a Sceptre in every Tribe? as is evident, ver. 16. Dan shall judge his People as one of the Sceptres \* of Israel. Suppose a Father had divided his Estate among twelve Sons, and should say of one of them, The Estate shall not depart from John for many Ages; could you possibly suppose him to

<sup>\*</sup>The original Word is Schevet, the same which is rendered Sceptre in the Prophecy relating to Judah.

mean more than the Share of the Estate given to John? Could you understand him to mean, that all the Estate, the twelve Shares, should come to John, and continue in his Family? The Case is the same here; twelve Princes are created, of one of them Jacob fays, The Sceptre shall not depart FROM HIM- until Shiloh come. not plain then that the Sceptres are distinguished here, and that it is foretold of one, that it shall long out-last the rest? The Words therefore, The Sceptre Shall not depart from Judah, are equivalent to these, Judah's Sceptre Shall not depart; and this Sense is justified by the Original, the Seventy, the Vulgate, and the Chaldee Paraphrast +. It must be remembered, that Judah does not in Gen. xlix. mean, what in After-times it came to mean, the whole People of the Jews; but it means distinctly the Tribe of Judab only, and the Words now under Confideration can possibly import no more than this, The Sceptre Shall not be taken from the Tribe of Judah - Consequently the Sceptre here is an Emblem of Authority in and over a Tribe only; and can by no means, in these Circumstances, be made to fignify

<sup>†</sup> Non auferetur principatum habens à Domo Judæ, C.P.

The Ruler shall not be taken away from the House of Judah.

# DISSERTATION III. 329 or denote an Authority over all the Tribes of Israel.

The same Word in the Original (Schevet) fignifies a Tribe and a Sceptre; and probably a Tribe, because a Tribe is a Collection of People under the Government of one Sceptre, or Authority \*. Others, I know, account otherwise for this Signification +: But the Seventy Interpreters would never have used the Greek Word Sun algor to denote a Tribe, had they not thought that the original Word was used to signify a Tribe, upon the Notion of its being a Body under one and the same Government. When the People were affembled for the Choice of a King, Samuel fays to them, Present yourselves before the Lord by your Tribes, I Sam. x. 19. π τὰ σκηπίρα υμών, (Seventy) and the Tribe of Benjamin was taken, Ibid. ver. 20. κ καθακληρεται σκηπίρου Βενιαμείν, (LXX.) When God threatens Solomon to divide his Kingdom, he adds, but I will give one Tribe

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Traductum vero nomen est ad signissicandum tribum — quod unaquæque tribus suam peculiarem virgam haberet, nomine suo inscriptam, quam tribuum principes — manu gestare consueverant — Cum Dominus Aaronem his verbis alloquitur; Sed et fratres tuos de tribu Levi, et sceptrum Patris tui sume tecum; intellige sceptrum ipsum, et totam tribum, quæ sceptro signissicabatur, et regebatur. Menochius de rep. Heb. Lib. i. Cap. iv.

<sup>†</sup> Schevet; Tribus quod ex arbore seu stirpe nata sit, h. e. è patre. Kircherus, Concord. in voce, Schevet.

to thy Son, I Kings xi. 13. Σκηπηςον εν δώσω τῷ ἡῷ σε, (LXX.) Many other Instances there are, but these are sufficient to shew the Relation between the Sceptre and the Tribe, and that it is conformable to the Language and Usage of Scripture, to understand, by the Word Sceptre, the Authority in and over

a fingle Tribe.

What the true Import of the Word Lawgiver is in this Place, cannot be determined, but by Reference to the Government or Constitution intended. When we know the Form of Government, we can eafily determine what Lawgiver fignifies; but we cannot from the Word. Lawgiver determine the Form of Government intended. The Reafon is, because there are as many kinds of Lawgivers as there are Forms of Government in the World. The Sense of the Word Lawgiver in this Place must necessarily therefore be governed by the Sense of the If Sceptre fignifies here the Word Sceptre. Authority and Power over a Tribe only, the Word Lawgiver, joined with it, must necesfarily be confined to mean fuch Lawgivers only as fingle Tribes had within themselves. Consequently, what has been said to fix the Meaning of the Word Sceptre, serves equally to fix the Sense of Lawgiver. The Seventy In-

Interpreters have rendered the Word Schevet by Aexwe, and Mechokek by Hysper . \* Mr. Ioncourt suspects that they were led by a kind of national Pride and Vanity to make Choice of these Terms, that carry in them such grand Ideas of royal and princely Power. But before the passing of this Censure, he ought to have examined whether the Seventy do constantly or usually employ these Terms to fignify fo much Power as he supposes. Agains and Aexar are used by the Seventy above an hundred Times at least to fignify the Head or Heads of the Tribes of Ifrael. There are twelve Instances of this Use of the Word in the second Chapter of the Book of Numbers, and about fixteen in another, Numb. iv. The Instances indeed are so many, that it is quite needless to produce any, the Concordance will furnish Authorities to every Enquirer. The Case is the same as to the Word 'Hysper .. In 2 Chron. v. 2. we meet with both these Words together in the same Sense. Solomon assembled all the Elders of Israel, & warlas τες άρχονίας των Φυλών, τες ήγεμένες σαίριών

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<sup>\*</sup> Prevenus de toute la pompe de la superiorité & des grandeurs dont je viens de parler, ils ont cru que Schevet, qui signisse communement Verge, doit être en cet endroit une Verge de Commandement; c'est pourquoi entrainez de ce beau côté ils ont traduit hardiment le Prince ne sera point oté à Juda. Lettres Critiques, p. 163.

τῶν ἡῶν Ἰσεφήλ. So again, 1 Chron. vii. 40. All these were the Children of Asher, Aρχονιες οίκες ωπτερών- ἡγέμενοι τῶν ἀρχόνων τῶν γενεαλογηθέντων ἐν τῆ ςἀσει τε ωολέμε. Thus the Sons of Esau, who were no other than Heads of Tribes, are called Ἡγεμόνες, Gen. κκκνί. and the Sons of Ishmael, who were Princes of the same sort, are styled, Gen. κκν. Αρχονίες. What Reason is there now to suspect the Seventy of Vanity, Prejudice, or Artisice; or to suppose that they mean any higher Degree of Power by the Words in this Place, than they do in many other Places where they make use of them?

A Lawgiver from between his Feet: There is no Interpretation of these Words, but what suits with the Exposition of the Prophecy now proposed; and therefore I may refer myself in this to the Reader's Choice among the feveral Interpretations given of this Phrase. The Words may be construed two ways; for we may either read thus, A Lawgiver from between his Feet Shall not depart from Judah; or thus, A Lawgiver shall not depart from between the Feet of Judah. In the first way of reading, the Meaning probably is, That the Lawgiver of Judah should be of his own Descendants; and so they were. In the second reading

reading the Meaning is, That the Tribe of Judah should have a Lawgiver of their own to the very last Times. This is Wagenseil's \* Sense of the Words; and it is the Sense of Onkelos.

But suppose the original Word to be rightly rendered in this Place Lawgiver, it will afford a strong Objection against any Interpretation which extends the Powers here mentioned over all the People of Ifrael. For the Tribe of Judah never had a Legislative Authority over all the Tribes; no, not even in the Days of David and Solomon. When the People defired a King, they expressed their Meaning very clearly, to have a Judge, and one to go out before them to fight their Battles, I Sam. viii. 20. And when Samuel rehearses to them the Manner of their King, there is no Appearance that he was to be a Lawgiver. And Moses, who was the only Lawgiver of the People of Ifrael, had excluded all Kings from this Power. They were to have a Copy of the Law, and not to turn afide from the Commandment, to the Right-Hand, or to the Left, Deut. xvii. 18, &c. And the Ordinances made by David, relating to the Service of the Temple, were established by Authority and Confent of the Princes

\* Carminis Lipmanni confutatio. p. 293.

and Rulers of Tribes, Ezra viii. 20. So little Appearance is there that Judah was ever Lawgiver to all the Tribes of Jacob. Nor indeed could this Power in a proper Sense belong to single Tribes; for though they might, and did make such Rules, as we commonly call Bye-laws, yet the Law of Moses was their unalterable Law, both for Civil and Ecclesiastical Affairs. And therefore I rather chuse to understand Judge (for so the Word in the Original may be understood) than Lawgiver, in this Place; and this agrees best to the Passage referred to before, Dan shall Judge his People as one of the Tribes of Israel.

As to the Word Shiloh I have nothing to add to the Expositions of the Learned. They who are desirous to see the several Ways of accounting for the Signification of this Word, may consult the Authors referred to by Wagenseil\*, Le Clerc +, and Saurin §. If by this Word we understand Pacificus, the Peacemaker, or Restorer of Peace, whom can it design, but him in whose Time there was to be abundance of Peace, and Righte-ousness for evermore? If we understand by it, Mittendus, the Person to be sent, who can

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<sup>\*</sup> Carm. Lip. conf. p. 294. + In locum. § Discourse
41. p. 519, &c.

that be, but the same, of whom so many Promises and Prophecies had been given; even the bleffed Seed? If we chuse rather to interpret Filius ejus, his Son; who is this peculiar Son of Judab, but the bleffed Seed; the Promise of which was settled on Judab? If we take the Version of the Seventy for our Guide, and render the Word with them, τα αποκεμενα αυτώ, οι ώ απόκειται, the same Person still is pointed out; the blessed Seed was the great Treasure in reserve for Judah; the bleffed Seed was he for whom all Things were referved, whose the Kingdom was to be. If, lastly, we follow Mr. Le Clerc, and render the Word Finis, (the End,) what End can be intended, but the End of the Settlement and Establishment made by Jacob at this Time; or, in other Words, the End of God's present Covenant, in virtue of which the Division of the Land of Canaan was made among the twelve Tribes of Jacob, and which was to be succeeded by the Covenant of better Hopes? In all Views the Prophecy must terminate in Christ; and a Continuance of the Power now fettled in the House of Judah is promised till the Messiah comes. This agrees with the Sense of all antient Expositors, both Jews and Christians,

as may be feen in the Authors already mentioned.

All these Expositions depend upon the Interpretation of the Word Shilob. And if we confider the Context, it will carry us to the fame Point. Judab is the only one who received two Bleffings from his Father, viz. The Promise of the Blessed Seed, and a Portion in the Land of Canaan, for the Maintenance of which a Government was established in his Family. This Prophecy promifes a longer Continuance of the Government in the House of Judah, than other Tribes were to expect, and fixes a Term for the Duration of Judab's Sceptre. What could make this Distinction, but the peculiar Bleffing given to Judah? And taking both his Bleffings together, is it not natural to think, that the Continuance of his temporal Dominion and Inheritance is affured to him to last till the Commencement of his better Promise? This is according to the Analogy of all the Prophecies from Abraham's Time; in all which the Land of Canaan is inseparably annexed to the Promise of the blessed Seed. Whoever had the one Promise had the other; whoever was excluded from the one was excluded from the other. For this Reason Ishmael and Esau were sent out to plant

plant other Countries, and had not a Foot allowed them in the Land of Canaan. Upon the Settlement made by Jacob in his Family, the Land of Canaan was divided, but that Part of it which attended upon the Promise of the bleffed Seed, was (as formerly) fo united and annexed to that Promise, that it could not be entirely forfeited and lost 'till the bleffed Seed came. And this is the Reafon why the Land of Judah, in distinction from the Land possessed by the other Tribes, is called by the Prophet Isaiab, the Land of Immanuel. He shall pass through Judah, be shall overflow and go over, be shall reach even to the Neck, and the stretching out of bis Wings shall fill the Breadth of thy Land, O Immanuel, Isa. viii. 8. What other Reason can be affigned for calling the Land of the House of Judab, the Land of Immanuel, rather than any other Part of the Land of Canaan, but this very Prophecy now under Confideration? which was indeed a Settlement of the Land of Judab, for a Term not to expire 'till Immanuel came.

Unto him shall the gathering of the People be. They who understood this Passage, as relating to the Messiah, have great Reason on their Side, as well from parallel Places of Scripture, as from the Authority of

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the most antient Interpreters. But yet fome learned Men are otherwise minded. and think that these Words by natural Construction are to be referred to Judah\*; and confidering that Judab is the Person here principally concerned, and whose Condition in the last Days is described; that Shilob is not, in grammatical Construction, the principal Person in this Passage, but is mentioned only as the Terminus ad quem, the Term to which the Sceptre should continue with Judab; it seems more consonant to the Rules. of Language to appropriate this Character to Judab, than to Shiloh. As to the main of the Prophecy, there is no Difference which ever way we take. According to the last of the two Interpretations, the Prophecy contains the most exact Description of the State and Polity of Judab, during the Continuance of his Sceptre after the Sceptres were removed from the other Tribes of Israel, that can be imagined. For the Remnant of all the Tribes after the Assyrian Captivity, were indeed gathered to Judah, and fell under the Obedience of that one Tribe; and the whole Nation, from being styled the People of Israel, were thenceforwards styled the People of Judah, or Jews. In this Sense,

<sup>\*</sup> See Mr. Le Clerc's Comment and Note upon the Place.

the Prophecy began to operate immediately upon the Division of the two Kingdoms. God promised Solomon to give one Tribe to bis Son for his Servant David's fake, 1 Kings xi. 13. which is twice again repeated in the same Chapter, Ibid. ver. 32, 36. But in Truth, two Tribes, that of Judab and that of Benjamin, together with Part of the Tribe of Simeon, and many Families of the Levites, and of the other Tribes, who dwelt within the Borders of 'fudab, remained under the Obedience of the Kingdom of Judah; and no Reason can be given why this Body is called one Tribe, but only this, that the Tribe of Judah alone maintained its Power and Constitution, the rest were all gathered to this Tribe, and funk in it. This Account may be collected from the Text itself; 'tis said, that the Children of Israel, which dwelt in the Cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them, I Kings xii. 17. And when an Account is given of Reboboam's raising Forces to recover his Kingdom, 'tis faid expresly, that he affembled all the House of Judah with the Tribe of Benjamin, Ibid. ver. 21. And yet in the very Verse before, 'tis said, There was none that followed the House of David, but the Tribe of Judah only, Ibid. ver. 20. Yet still, when God

God fends a Message to those under the Obedience of Reboboam, they are mentioned thus, The House of Judah and Benjamin, and the Remnant of the People, Ibid. ver. 23. These are they who afterwards were comprehended under the Name of Jews; a Term introduced to fignify the Tribe of Judab, and all the rest of the People united with and under that Tribe. From the Division of the Kingdoms Judah was considered as making the People of one entire Kingdom, and gave name to all affociated with them. We have a clear Account how this Matter stood in the second Book of Chronicles. The Priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to Reboboam, out of all their Coasts - And after them, out of all the Tribes of Ifrael, fuch as fet their Hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their So they strengthened the Kingdom Fathers. of Judah, 2 Chron. xi. 13, 16, 17. xv. 9. All who came from other Tribes were confidered but as an additional Strength to Judah, they preserved no distinct Polity of their own, as belonging to other Tribes. From the Time of the Assyrian Captivity, the Case is very plain; there remained, without doubt, many private Families

milies and Persons in the Land, who escaped in the general Confusion; but they subfifted not as Parts of distinct Tribes, but fell under the Dominion and Power of Judah; as appears in the Reformation made by King Josiah, which reached, not only to the Cities of Judah, but to all the Countries that pertained to the Children of Israel, to the Cities of Manasseb and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphthali, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 6, 33. Cities in which the Kings of Judah had no Influence or Authority, fo long as the separate Kingdom of Israel subsisted. After the Return from the Babylonish Captivity, we hear of little else but Jews, though we know, the Benjamites were joined with them; and the Decree of Cyrus being a general Permission for the Return of all the Tribes, many Families of other Tribes returned to their own Country: But all these were gathered to Judah, and became one People, 1 Chron. ix. 3. And in this State and Condition Things continued till the Coming of Christ, and the last Destruction of the Nation by the Roman Power, Luke ii. 36. Acts xxvi. 7.

If we consider how the Event corresponds to this Interpretation of the Prophecy in other Respects, we shall find that from the Death

of Jacob, there was a Government fettled in the several Tribes, with respect to their own distinct People: that the Heads of Tribes together did, by common Confent, administer the Affairs of the People in general. This appears during the Abode of the Children of Ifrael in Egypt; for Moses and Aaron were fent to the Elders of the People, Exod. iii. 16. iv. 20\*. These Elders were Heads of Houses, as appears soon after in the History, Exod. vi. 14 +. and Rulers of the Congregation, Exod. xvi. 22 ||. That the People were formed into Tribes in Egypt, is plain; because they are mentioned in that Capacity as foon as they got into the Wilderness, without any new Order or Constitution to make them fo. The Stones of the Priest's Breastplate were twelve by the Appointment of God, to answer to the Number, and to bear the Names of the twelve Tribes, Exod. xxxix.14. and when God orders an Account to be taken of the Number of the Children of Ifrael, foon after their Coming out of Egypt, a Man of every Tribe, and Head of the House of his Fathers, is appointed to affift Moses, Numb. i. 3.

<sup>\*</sup> Trì yegeriar run viun 'Iogan's. The Senate of the Children Ifrael. LXX. Catum filiorum Ifrael. Vulg Exod xii. 3.

<sup>† &#</sup>x27;A·χνηνοὶ οἴκων παθριῶν αὐθῶι, LXX, Principes domorum per familias fuas, Vulg.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Agxorles Tre owaywrie, LXX.

These Heads of Houses are particularly reckoned up and named; and their Quality and Dignity in Israel is set forth in these Words, These were the Renowned of the Congregation, Princes of the Tribes of their Fathers, Heads of Thousands in Israel, ibid. ver. 16.

Since then there were Elders, and Heads of Houses in Egypt, who acted with Authority for the People, and to whom, therefore, the Message of God by Moses and Aaron, was directed: Since the Destruction of Tribes appears plainly as foon as the People came out of Egypt, and Princes of the People appear transacting the Affairs of their People; and no Appointment or Constitution to fettle these Tribes appears from the Time of Jacob: and fince there is no mention of any Tribe in Ifrael, until 'facob's Appointment of them just before his Death; it is manifest, that this Constitution owes its Rise to Jacob's Appointment, and took place from that Time.

From this Time to the Time of the Captivity of Babylon, there is no Suspicion that the Tribe of Judab wanted Rulers and Princes within themselves: The Power of the Heads of Tribes subsisted under the Government of the Kings of Judab, and Israel,

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and was so considerable, that nothing of Moment was done without their Advice and Consent \*.

The ten Tribes which constituted the Kingdom of Israel, were carried into Captivity by Salmaneser about seven hundred Years before Christ; and this put an End to the Being of these Tribes: they never recovered again, or appeared as a People from that Time to this. And here the Completion of the Prophecy relating to the Continuation of Judah's Sceptre, after the Removal of the others, has its Commencement.

The Division of the Kingdom prepared the Way for the Completion of this Prophecy. Had all the Tribes continued under one Head, they would probably have all undergone the same Fate; but being divided in Interest, and having different Kings, and consequently not being concerned together in Matters of Peace and War, their Fortunes proved very different; for the Assyrian Cap-

tivity

<sup>\*</sup> Hi Tribuum Principes Reipublicæ Hebraicæ erant Megistanes, & Capita; & totius Populi Magistratui, sive Judex esset sive Rex, aderant; & cum illo sedentes partim consilio inibant, partim jus reddebant. Quinetiam simul cum summo Reipublicæ Capite, Judice, aut Rege, se obligabant, si quid esset jurejurando publico sanciendum. Menoch. de Rep. Heb. Lib. i. cap. 6.

tivity was Ruin to the ten Tribes, but the Babylonish Captivity was only a seventy

Years Punishment of Judab.

The seventy Years of the Babylonish Captivity, is the only Period of Time that can create any Difficulty upon this Scheme. But if we consider that the Jews were not carried to Babylon to be Slaves, but were transplanted as a Colony, to people the great, and newly enlarged City of Babylon \*; that they are commanded therefore by the Prophet, to build Houses and plant Gardens; and to feek the Peace of the City, in which they were Captives, Jer. xxix. 5, 7. Circumstances which prove them not to have been Slaves in Babylon: That upon the Expiration of the feventy Years, many of them were fo well fettled in Ease and Plenty, that they refused to return to their own Country again: If we consider further, that the Jews lived at Babylon as a distinct People, and were governed in their own Affairs by their own Rulers and Elders, appointed Feasts and Fasts, and ordered all others Matters relating to their own civil and ecclefiaftical Affairs

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<sup>\*</sup> See Dr. Prideaux's Connexion of the Old and New Testament, Part I. B. 2. p. 96. 8vo. Edit.

within themselves \*; it will take off the Weight of this Difficulty, and shew us that the Power and Sceptre of Judah, relative to the Being and Subfistence of the Tribe, were not removed during this Captivity. And indeed, what Reason is there to think, that this Constitution was disturbed by the transplanting the People to Babylon, which began under the Power of the Kings of Egypt, and subsisted with all the Forms and Changes of Government, which the People of Israel underwent, from their coming out of the Egyptian Bondage, to their going into the Captivity of Babylon? Sure we are, from the Accounts preserved in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, Ezra i. 5. 4i. 68. iii. 12. viii. 1. ix. 1. x. 14. Nehem. ii. 16. iv. 14, 19. vi. 17. that the Tribes of Judah and Benjamin subsisted as such, during the Captivity, and preserved very

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<sup>\*</sup> The Decree for destroying the Jews in Apocryphal Esther, is founded in this, That they had Laws contrary to all Nations, and continually despised the Commandments of the King, ch. xiii. ver. 4. And when the Decree is reversed, they are said to live by most just Laws, ch. xvi. ver. 15. Esther, in her Prayer for the People, says, O Lord, give not thy Sceptre unto them that be nothing, and let them not laugh at our Fall, ch. xiv. 11. And if the Writer of the History of Susanna knew any Thing of the State of the Jews in Babylon, 'tis plain they had Rulers and Judges of their own, who executed their Laws even in capital Causes, ver. 41. and 62.

regular Accounts of their Genealogies: That they had likewise their Chiefs and Elders, who decided their Affairs, there is no doubt; they are mentioned in Ezra and Nehemiah, as the Persons managing the great Affairs of the Return, and re-establishing the Service of God in Jerusalem: That they came back to their own Country as a People and Nation governed by their own Laws, is evident from the Complaint sent against them to Artaxerxes, in which they make too great a Figure, and are represented too confiderable to be thought a Set of mere Slaves, subjected entirely to a foreign Yoke, without Law or Government of their own, Ezra iv. 11. 'Tis true, that, from the Time of their Captivity, the Jews were never so free a People again, as they had been formerly; they lived under the Subjection of the Persian Monarch, and under the Empire of the Greeks and Romans to their last Destruction; but still they lived as a distinct People, governed by their own Law \*: And the Authority of the Persian and other Kings over them destroyed not the Rule and Authority of Judab, which subfisted with it;

<sup>\*</sup> Artaxerxes's Commission to Exra is express, that he should appoint such Magistrates and Judges, as know the Laws of thy God.

as it had, in its first Commencement, subfisted under the Kings of Egypt, and oftentimes under Judges and Kings of their own. How the Case stood in the Time of the Asmonean Princes, may be collected from feveral Passages of the Maccabees; but especially from the Preambles of publick Leagues made by, and with the Jews \*. Historians oftentimes speak loosely, but authentick publick Acts preserve Forms, and shew in what Hands the Government resides. The Ambassadors sent from Jerufalem to Rome, speak in the Name of Judas Maccabæus and his Brethren, and the People of the Jews, 1 Mac. viii. 20. The League which followed, upon this Application to Rome, is styled, A Covenant with the People of the Jews, Ibid. v. 29. xii. 3. xv. 17. When the League was made with the Lacedemonians, the publick Letter was in the following Style, Jonathan the High-priest, and the Elders of the Nation and the Priests, and the other People of the Jews, xii. 6. When Simon was their Governor, his Authority was conveyed to him, in the Congregation of the Priests and the People, and Rulers of the

Nation,

<sup>\*</sup> Περσών κ) μετ' ἐκείνες ἡγυμένων τῆς ᾿Ασίας Μακεδόνων, Αἰγύπλιοι μὲν ἐδέλευσν ἀιδραπόδων ἐδὲν διαφέροντες ἡμεῖς ἐλ ἔντες ἐλεύθεροι σεροσέτε κ) τῶν σείριξ σόλεων ἡρχομεν, &c. Joseph. contra Apion. Lib. II. Seg. 11.

Nation, and Elders of the Country, xiv. 28. These are elsewhere called, The Council, and the rest of the Jews, 2 Macc. xi. 27. and the People of the Jews, Ibid. v. 34. These Instances are sufficient to shew, that the Polity of the Jews, as a distinct People, under Heads and Rulers of their own, subsisted in this Period, and was not extinguished by the Power of the Asmonean Princes.

That Things continued in this State to the very Death of Christ, may be evinced from many Passages in the Gospel; some I shall

produce, and close this Article.

When our Saviour tells the Jews, The Truth shall make you free, they reply, We are Abraham's Children, and were never in Bondage to any Man, John viii. 32, 33. Surely they had not forgot their Captivity in Babylon, much less could they be ignorant of the Power of the Romans over them at that Time; and yet you fee they account themselves free. And so they were, for they lived by their own Laws, and executed Judgment among themselves. This is plain from the Case of the Woman taken in Adultery; Moses, in the Law, say the Scribes and Pharises, commanded us that such should be stoned, but what sayest thou? John viii. 5. When Aa4

our Saviour foretells his Disciples that they should be delivered up to Councils, and scourged in Synagogues, Matth. x. 17. he shews, at the same Time, what Power and Authority were exercised in the Councils and Synagogues of the Jews: When Pilate, willing to be delivered of Jesus, says to the Jews, Take ye him, and crucify him, John xix. 6; and again, Take ye him, and judge him according to your own Law, John xviii. 31; he also shews, that the Jews lived under their own Law, and had the Exercise of judicial Authority among themselves\*. This was the Condition of Things at the Death of Christ.

By this Deduction it appears evidently, That the Sceptre placed in the Hand of Judab, by his Father Jacob just before his Death, continued in his Posterity till the very Death of Christ. From that Time all Things began to work towards the Destruction of the Jewish Polity, and within a few Years their City, Temple, and Government were utterly ruined; and the Jews, not carried into a gentle Captivity, to enjoy their Law and live as a distinct People in a foreign Country, but they were sold like Beasts in a Market, and became Slaves in the strictest

<sup>\*</sup> See this proved at large by Wagenfeil, Carm. Lip. Con.

Sense; and from that Day to this have had neither Prince, nor Lawgiver among them. Nor will they ever be able, after all their Pretences, to shew any Signs or Marks of the Sceptre among them, till they discover the unknown Country, where never Mankind dwelt, and where the Apocryphal Esdras has placed their Brethren of the Ten Tribes, 2 Esdr. xiii. 41.

Before I take leave of this Subject, it is necessary to observe, That this Interpretation of the Prophecy of Jacob relating to Judah, is very much confirmed by another Prophecy given by Moses, not long before his Death. In the xxxiiid Chapter of Deuteronomy Moses bleffes the Tribes; and as there are many Passages in this last Benediction of Moses, which correspond to the Blesfings pronounced by Jacob, so particularly, the Bleffing of Judab by Moses seems to relate to the last State of that Tribe, and the Continuance of the Sceptre of Judab, after the Dispersion of the other Tribes. Words of Moses are these; Hear, Lord, the Voice of Judab, and bring him unto his People : Let bis Hands be sufficient for bim, and be thou an Help to him from his Enemies. Deut. xxxiii. 7. This Benediction cannot relate to the Time when it was given; for then

then Judab's Hands were very sufficient for him, this Tribe being by much the greatest of the twelve Tribes, as appears by two different Accounts of the Forces of Ifrael in the Book of Numbers, Numb. i. and xxvi; and there was more Reason to put up this Petition for feveral other Tribes, than for Judah. Besides, what is the Meaning of bringing Judab to his People? How were he and his People at this Time separated? What means likewise the other Part of the Petition? Be thou an Help to him from his Enemies. This Petition supposes a State of Distress; yet what Distress was Judab in at this Time, at least what greater Distress than the other Tribes? The antient Targums, and fome old Versions, understand the first Petition of bringing Judah back to his People, to be only a Request in his behalf for safe Return from the Day of Battle; but was there not the same Reason for the same Petition in behalf of every Tribe? Nay, how much better would it have fuited Reuben, Gad, and the half Tribe of Manasseh, who left their People and their Settlements on the other Side of Jordan, and passed over the River in the very Front of the Battle to affift their Brethren? Josh. iv. 12.

But if you refer this Prophecy to the Prophecy

phecy of Jacob, and to the Continuance of the Sceptre of Judab after the Destruction of the other Tribes, every Expression is natural and proper, and fuited to the Occasion. Do but suppose Moses in the Spirit of Prophecy to have a Sight of the State of Affairs when all the People were in Captivity, and you will fee how this prophetic Prayer answers to that State. All the Tribes were in Captivity, the Ten Tribes in Assyria, and Judah in Babylon; but it was implied in Jacob's Prophecy, that Judah should retain the Sceptre, and return again; for Judab only therefore does Moses pray, that he may come to his People again. Jacob had foretold, that at this Time the gathering of the People should be to Judab; that he should be all in all, the only Head of all the Remnant of Israel. These People, destined to be gathered to Judab, were now no People, could be no People, till the Return of Judab; at which Return many of all the Tribes were to join themselves to Judab, and with him to form one People; how properly then does Moses pray that Judah might return to his People?

Let his Hands be sufficient for him: Good Reason was there for this Petition, for scarcely were his Hands sufficient at the Return from Babylon. The Tribe of Judab, Num.xxvi.

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reckoning only those of twenty Years old and upward. But upon the Return from Babylon, Judah, with Benjamin, the Levites, and the Remnant of Israel, made only 42,360, Ezra ii. 64; and in so weak a State they were, that Sanballat, in great Scorn, said, What do these feeble Jews? Neh. iv. 2. And the People themselves complain, as being not sufficient to go through the Toil of building the Wall: And Judah said, The Strength of the Bearers of Burdens is decayed, and there is much Rubbish, so that we are not able to build the Wall, Nehem. iv. 10.

Be thou an Help to him from his Enemies. The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah are convincing Proofs of the great Difficulties and Oppositions which the Jews sound in setting up their Temple and City. Once their Enemies had so prevailed, that Orders came from the Court of Persia to stop all their Proceedings; and even at last, when Nehemiah came to their Assistance with a new Commission from Artaxerxes, they were so beset with Enemies, that the Men employed in building the Wall, every one with one of his Hands wrought in the Work, and with the other Hand held a Weapon, Neh. iv. 17.

Lay

Lay these two Prophecies now together; Jacob foretels that Judah's Sceptre should continue till Shiloh came; which is in effect foretelling that the Sceptres of the other Tribes should not continue so long. Moses in the Spirit of Prophecy sees the Desolation of all the Tribes; he sees the Tribes of the Kingdom of Israel carried away by the Assyrians, the People of Judah by the Babylonians; he sees that Judah should again return, weak, baraffed, and scarcely able to maintain himself in his own Country; for them therefore he conceives this prophetic Prayer: Hear, Lord, the Voice of Judab, and bring him unto his People: Let his Hands be sufficient for bim, and be thou an Help to him from his Enemies.

You will say, perhaps, why did not facob foretel also the Continuance of the Sceptre of Benjamin, for the Tribe of Benjamin ran the same Fortune with that of Judab; they went together into Captivity, they returned home together, and were both in Being when Shilob came? In answer to this I

have two Things to offer.

First, It has already appeared, that, from the Division of the Kingdoms after the Death of Solomon, the Tribe of Benjamin, and the Remnant of Israel, that is, Part of

all the other Tribes, adhered to Judah as their Head, and this was confonant unto Jacob's Prophecy, Unto him shall the gathering of the People be.

Secondly, Tho' the Continuance of the Sceptre of Benjamin is not foretold (for the Sceptre was to be 'Judah's) yet the Continuance of the Tribe or People of Benjamin is distinctly foretold both by Jacob and Mo-The Bleffing of Benjamin, as delivered by Jacob, is thus: Benjamin shall ravin as a Wolf; in the Morning he shall devour the Prey, and at Night he shall divide the Spoil. As delivered by Moses, it is thus: Of Benjamin, he faid, The Beloved of the Lord Shall dwell in Safety by him, and the Lord shall cover him all the Day long, and he shall dwell between his Shoulders. When Jacob professes to declare what shall befal his Sons in the last Times, is it hard to say what must be understood by the Morning and Night in Jacob's Prophecy concerning Benjamin? The natural Morning and Night cannot possibly be understood here; and what other Morning and Night can you suppose intended, but the Morning and the Night of the Yewish\*

State?

<sup>\*</sup> Thus some Jewish Interpreters, referred to by Bochart, understood the Expression. Mane, id est, primis Israelitici regni temporibus——Sub vesperam, id est, post Captivitatis Babylonicæ tempora. Hieron. cap. x. pag. 828.

State? For this State is the Subject of all Jacob's Prophecy from one End to the other; consequently it is here foretold of Benjamin, that he should continue to the very last Times of the Jewish State. And this Interpretation is confirmed by Moses's Prophecy, for the Prophecy of Moses is in Truth an Exposition of Jacob's Prophecy. Benjamin, fays Moses, shall dwell in Safety; the Lord shall cover him ALL THE DAY LONG, be shall dwell between his Shoulders. What is this, all the Day long? You fee how Benjamin is distinguished; he is to dwell in Safety, under the Cover of the Lord, and between his Shoulders all the Day long. Does not this import a Promise of a longer Continuance to Benjamin, than to the other Tribes? And was it not most exactly fulfilled?

The learned Bochart, upon very slight Grounds, supposes an Inversion in the Order of the Words in Jacob's Prophecy concerning Benjamin; and by the Morning and the Night, he understands the Night and Morning; so that the Time described is, in his Sense, the whole Night, and not the whole Day. All this is built upon the Property of the Wolf, to which Benjamin is compared: It is the Night Wolf, says Bochart, which catches the Prey in the Night, and feeds on

it in the Morning. But I very much question whether the Style of the Scripture will bear the Test of such Classic Nicety and Exactness. And the this Imagination has been followed by considerable Commentators, yet since Moses, in his own Prophecy on Benjamin, has expounded this Morning and Night, by all the Day long, there is no room to make any further Question about it.

I have nothing more to add, but to acquaint the Reader, that the Interpretation of Jacob's Prophecy, now advanced, is not a mere Invention of my own; it is, as to the main Point, the same with that which is the fourth in Huetius, and by him rejected, but for fuch Reasons as have been fully obviated in this Account. It is the fame which Junius and Tremellius, and our own learned Countryman Ainsworth, espoused; and which not many Years ago was revived and improved by Mr. Ioncourt. This last mentioned Gentleman published several Letters upon obscure Passages of Scripture, and amongst the rest one upon the Sceptre of Judrh, which are very well worth the reading. As to the Letter upon the Sceptre of Judab, if I had thought nothing wanting in it to clear this Prophecy, I would not have troubled

bled the World with this Differtation. But whether I have succeeded better in this Attempt, than those who have gone before me in the same Argument, belongs not to me to judge.



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bide the World with the Differtation. But whether, there in this Attendant, the thole who have gone before me in the dame Argument, belongs not to me to judge.

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dichs of our 'I not an I Country. A

CHRIST'S Entry into Jerusalem.

HE Circumstances of this Piece of Scripture History are well known, and not less to those wo despise, than to those

who receive the Gospel. My Intention is to confider the Prophecy relating to this Fact, as it stands in Zechariah, Chap. ix. ver. 9. And tho' the Subject of this Differtation has no immediate Relation to the preceding Discourses, yet it may not perhaps be improper to subjoin to them the Explication of a Paffage, which is fure always to find its way into every Conversation or Controversy upon this Subject of Prophecy.

There is indeed no Circumstance relating to the Messiah that has given Occasion to more profane Wit and Ridicule than this now before us. We reckon an Ass to be a

B b 2

contemptible Creature; and a Man, especially a Man of Character, riding upon an Ass, to be a ridiculous Figure. These are Prejudices of our Time and Country. And when they who look no further than to the Manners and Customs which are before them, examine this Part of facred Story by the Standard of modern Prejudices, they see, or think they see, something quite inconsistent with the Gravity and Dignity of the Person pretending to be King of the Jews, when Christ is represented entering in Triumph into Jerusalem mounted on an Ass.

But, contemptible as an Ass, or a Man riding on an Ass, may be at present, from the Beginning it was not so. In many Countries, and particularly in Judea, Persons of the highest Distinction were usually so mounted. The Governors of Israel are described in the Song of Deborah as riding on white Asses, Judg. v. 10. And the thirty Sons of Jair, who was Judge, and Prince over Israel twenty-two Years, are said to ride on thirty Asses, Judg. x. 4. And another Judge of Israel is recorded to have had forty Sons and thirty Nephews that rode on seventy Ass Colts, Judges xii. 14.

Were it at all necessary, it would be easy

to confirm this Observation with many more Authorities; but this Passage of Scripture will furnish other Enquiries, and of a more ferious Confideration.

For supposing it to have been an usual thing to ride on an Ass, how comes this usual thing to be mentioned in Relation to the Messiah as a Mark of Distinction? Might not the Prophet upon this Supposition as well have faid, he should come walking on foot? And would he not have been as well known by one Character as by the other? Besides,

If you turn to the Book of Zachariab, where this Prophecy is to be found, you will fee the Person there described to be a King. a just King, and one baving Salvation: And what is there in this Character of riding on the Fole of an Ass that is peculiar to a King, to a Just King, and to one who was to bring Salvation and Deliverance to his People?

If we look into the present, or into the antient World, we shall not find Reason to appropriate this Character to Kings: Those of Egypt, Assyria, and of other Nations Neighbours to Judea, rode in another manner: Much less shall we be able to find any Connexion between the Justice and Ability of

B b 3

of a Prince to save his People, and this Circumstance of Riding on the Fole of an Ass.

Since then this prophetical Character can never be accounted for by confidering the State and Condition of Kings in general; there must needs have been something very peculiar in the Circumstances of a King of Israel, on which the Propriety of this Character is founded.

I shall therefore endeavour to trace out this peculiar Circumstance, and to set this Prophecy in a proper Light; which has been very greatly abused, and, perhaps, only because it has been very little understood.

If we look into the History of the Rise and Fall of Nations, we shall generally find that their Prosperity and Success have borne some Proportion to their Force and Power, and to the Conduct and Ability of their Leaders. But with the Jews, who from Slaves in Egypt, became a great and powerful People, the Case was not so. The best and greatest of their Kings, and he who carried the Empire to the greatest Height, has left us another Account of their Affairs. "The People says he, got not the Land in "Possession by their own Sword, neither did "their own Arm save them: But thy Right

" Hand

" Hand and thine Arm, and the Light of " thy Countenance, because thou hadst a " Favour unto them." Pfal. xliv. 3. When we read this, and other like Passages, we are apt to ascribe them to the Piety and Devotion of the Psalmist, and to look upon them only as Acknowledgments of God's general. Providence in the Affairs of the World; and this makes us apt to overlook, or not fufficiently to attend to, the historical Truth which they contain. It is true, indeed, that all Success may in a just Sense be ascribed to God; that it is He, who giveth Victory unto Kings: But yet he ordinarily makes use of natural Means; and it is no Offence to his Providence, that Princes lift their Thousands of Horse and Foot, to secure themselves and their Dominions. But with the Yews it was otherwise: They were never so weak, as when they made themselves strong; never so certainly ruined, as when their Force was great enough to create in them a Confidence in themselves. For God had taken the Defence of Ifrael upon himself; and whenever the People took it out of his Hands, and placed it in their own, they were fure to be undone.

Nay, so tender was God of his Honour B b 4 in

in this respect, and so concerned to justify his Promise to defend Israel, in the Eyes of the World, that he would not always permit natural Causes to interfere in their Deliverance, lest the People should grow doubtful to whom they should ascribe their Victories. When Gideon stood up to deliver the People from the Midianites, he raifed an Army of thirty-two thousand Men: God refused to go forth with so great an Host, and the Reafon given for it is this; "The People that " are with thee, are too many for me to " give the Midianites into their Hands, left " Ifrael vaunt themselves against me, saying, " Mine own Hand hath faved me." Judg. vii. 2. Accordingly, the thirty-two Thousand were reduced to Three Hundred, and by them the Host of Midian was overthrown.

To come nearer to our present Purpose. For the same Reason it was that God would not permit the People to have Horses and Chariots of War for their Desence; not because they were thought useless in War, for it is well known that the Strength of the antient Militia consisted chiefly in them, as appears in the Scripture-History, and in the oldest Writers of profane Story. Such was the Strength of Egypt, and such the Force

of the Affyrians, and of the other Eastern Nations. And it is observable, that when God is introduced in the Book of Job, setting forth the great Works of the Creation, he describes the Horse as if made on purpose for the Day of Battle. "Hast thou says

" God) given the Horse Strength? Hast

" thou clothed his Neck with Thunder?

" Canst thou make him afraid as a Graf-

" hopper? The Glory of his Nostrils is terrible.

"He paweth in the Valley, and rejoiceth

" in his Strength; he goeth on to meet the

" armed Men.

" He mocketh at Fear, and is not affright-

" ed; neither turneth he back from the

" Sword.

"The Quiver rattleth against him, the

" glittering Spear and Shield.

" He swalloweth the Ground with Fierce-

" ness and Rage; neither believeth he that it

" is the Sound of the Trumpet.

"He faith among the Trumpets, Ha,

" ha; and he smelleth the Battle afar off,

" the Thunder of the Captains, and the

" Shoutings."

But this Courage, this Aptness for War in Horses, was the very Reason why God

would not fuffer his People to make use of them for their Defence. He himself had undertaken their Cause, and he wanted neither Horse nor Foot to fight his Battles. Of this he gave sufficient Proofs in the first Instance of their Deliverance. When he brought them out of Egypt, they were a. mere Crowd of Women and Children, and of Men trained up in Slavery, under hard and cruel Task-masters. On the Egyptians Side were the antient Soldiery of the Kingdom, a mighty Power of Chariots and Horses, led on by Princes, and by Nobles. And what was the Iffue? The Strength of Egypt was destroyed, and the People faved. And the Glory which God took to himfelf in faving a weak People against the Strength of the Chariots and Horses of Pharaoh, is finely described in the Song of Moses.

"I will fing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the Horse and his

" Rider hath he thrown into the Sea.

" The Lord is a Man of War; the Lord

" is his Name. Pharoah's Chariots and his

" Host hath he cast into the Sea."

It may be thought perhaps no Wonder that the People at this Time had neither Chariots nor Horses; for where should they

have

have them? They were themselves but Slaves, and doubtless their Masters were cautious enough not to put the Power of War into their Hands. Let us go on then, and fee how the Case stood afterwards, when the People had an Opportunity of furnishing themselves with Horses and Chariots; if it had been lawful for them fo to do. After the Death of Moses, Joshua was in command over the People: His Victories over the Canaanites, so alarmed the Neighbouring Princes, that with one Confent they confederated against him, and brought together an incredible Multitude in Arms; and as it is particularly remarked, with Horses and Chariots very many. Joshua prevailed against them, and took all their Horses and Chariots; and had an Opportunity of strengthening his Army with Cavalry. But observe the express Command of God to him: Thou shalt bough, or hamstring, their Horses, and burn their Chariots with Fire, Josh. xi 6. Is this the common Practice of War? Do Princes, who want Horses to mount their own Troops, use to destroy those taken from the Enemy, or render them useless by hamstringing them? There can be no Foundation for the Command

mand to destroy the Horses, but this only, that it was not lawful for Joshua to keep

them, for the Reason already given.

I have laid these Observations together, to give Light to a general Precept of the Law, in which every Prince, who should succeed to the Government of Israel, was concerned; and upon which the true Interpretation of the Prophecy, now before us, does, as I conceive, depend. It is to be found in the xviith of Deut. in these Words, " He (that is, whoever should be King of " Ifrael) should not multiply Horses to him-" felf, nor cause the People to return to " Egypt, to the end that he should multi-" ply Horses." If we consider the Situation of Judab, how it was furrounded by Warlike Nations, who had strong Armies both of Horse and Foot; it will be impossible to justify this Law by the Measures of human Prudence: But the true Reason of the Law is expressed in the xxth of Deut-"When thou goest out to Battle against " thine Enemies, and feest Horses and " Chariots, and a People more than thou, " be not afraid of them: For the Lord thy " God is with thee, which brought thee

"out of the Land of Egypt." When God forbad his People the Use of Horses and Chariots, he promised that He would be to them instead of Horses and Chariots. This Law therefore was to be a standing Trial of Prince and People, whether they had Trust and Considence in God their Deliverer. In this View there is Sense in the Law; for he who gave it, knew how to remedy the Inconveniencies which naturally attend it. In any other View it is unaccountable; and if weighed in the Scales of worldly Politicks ridiculous and absurd.

The next Thing to be considered is, what Effect this Law produced, and what Influence the Obedience or Disobedience of the Princes to this Law, had upon the

Affairs of Israel.

It is evident from the Jewish History, that this Law was observed for near Four Hundred Years, to the End of David's Reign, and in Part of Solomon's. That Joshua had no Chariots or Horses in his Army, has been already observed. When Deborah and Baruch delivered Israel from Sisera, who had Nine Hundred Chariots of Iron; Judg. v. 15. it is expressly said in the Text, That Baruch was sent on Foot

into the Valley. And in this manner did the antient Judges of Israel wage War, who were raifed up from Time to Time by God to deliver his People. And in this manner David, who extended his Empire from . Egypt to Syria, and Eastwards as far as Euphrates, in this manner did he wage War; not for Want of Chariots and Horfes, for he took from Hadadezar, Son to the King of Zobab, in one Day a Thoufand Chariots, and Seven Hundred Horfemen; but he houghed all the Chariot Horses, reserving of them only for an Hundred Chariots, (2 Sam. viii. 4.) When he had taken a Thousand Chariots with their Horses, and destroyed Nine out of Ten, it is evident he had no Thought of raising a Military Force of this kind; probably he retained them for his State, and might do it lawfully, without incurring the Guilt of multiplying Horses, which are the Terms in which the Law is conceived. Certain it is, he made no use of them in War; and so far he complied with the true Sense and Spirit of the Law. What Use he made of them, is no where faid: But when Absalom aimed at the Crown, he prepared Chariots and Horses, and Fifty Men to run before him, ( 2 Sam.

2 Sam. xv. 1.) which was plainly affecting the Pomp and State of a King; and yet, in the Day of Battle, we find him mounted on a Mule, the Colt of an Ass. And if we may judge what the King did, by feeing what this Rival of the Crown affected to do, it is plain David's Hundred Chariots were used for State in Peace, and not for Strength in War. And in this Sense, I conceive we are to understand a Passage in Jeremiah, where he promises the People of Judah, that if they prove obedient, there should enter into the Gates of the City Kings and Princes, fitting on the Throne of David, riding in Chariots and on Horses, Jer. xvii. 25. which is plainly a Description of a State of Peace and Security; (compare ver. 27.) and taken in any other Sense, it must stand in Contradiction to the Law in Deut. and many other Texts of Scripture \*. But to go on.

It is very much to be remarked, that, during this Period, (i. e. from the coming out of Egypt to the End of David's Reign) the People of Ifrael never suffered for want of

Force

If the ixth and following Chapters of Zethariah are, indeed, (as Mr. Mede and other Learned think, Parts of the Prophecy of Jeremiah, this Distinction will be necessary to reconcile this Rassage, Jer. xvii. 25, and that which is now to be found, Zech. ix. 2.

Force and Strength in War; they were often punished, as they often deserved it, for their Idolatry; but whenever they repented and turned to God, their Deliverance did not wait for want of Forces. Troops, sew in Number, and seemingly unfit for Action, supported neither by Chariots nor by Horsemen, proved an Overmatch for Royal Armies. This may be verified in the Instances of Gideon, Baruch, Jephthah, and Samuel, and of all others called forth by God to save his People.

During this Period also it was that the Kingdom of Ifrael was carried to its utmost Height by David. He held the Kings about him, how gallantly foever they and their Troops were mounted, under Tribute and Subjection, tho' he himself rode on a Mule, and provided no better Equipage for his Son on his Coronation Day. " Cause, says Da-" vid, Solomon my Son to ride upon mine " own Mule, and bring him down to Gi-" bon, and let Zadoc the Priest, and Na-" than the Prophet, anoint him there King " over Israel." (I Kings i. 33, 34.) When David looked back and contemplated on this State of Things, he might well fay, Some trust in Chariots, and some in Horses, but

but we will remember the Name of the Lord

our God, Pfal. xx. 7.

In the Reign of Solomon Things quickly changed. He married the Daughter of the King of Egypt, and opened a Commerce between that Country and his own; and the next News we hear of him is, "That he had " forty thousand Stalls of Horses for his "Chariots, and twelve thousand Horsemen." 1 Kings iv. 26. They who succeeded him followed his Example; and from his Time the Kings of Judah and Ifrael had, whenever they were able to keep them, a Strength of Chariots and Horsemen.

Let us fee now what they got by this Change. Solomon came to a Kingdom firmly established, the Princes round him were tributary to him, and those at a Distance feared and admired him; but Troubles foon overtook him, the Edomite on one Side, the King of Damascus on the other, insulted him: nor was he able with all his new Forces to quell these upstart Enemies.

But the most remarkable Event, and which feems defigned by Providence to humble the Pride of Israel, was, the Divifion of the Kingdom upon the Death of Solomon; which produced a War of many Years Continuance between Ifrael and Ju-Cc

dab.

dah, in which their Forces were employed with various Success in weakening and destroying each other. During this Time the King of Egypt, the Country which had furnished Solomon with all his Horses, came up against Ferusalem, and took it, and carried away all the Treasures of the Temple, and of the Royal Palace, which had been long gathering by David and Solomon: And Rehoboam, the Son of Solomon, became Servant to the King of Egypt, 2 Chron. xii. 8, 9. Thus did Solomon and his House prosper with their great Strength of Chariots and Horses. Indeed we may from this Time date the Ruin of Ifrael; the two Kingdoms were fo weakened by their internal War, that they were unable to defend themselves against their Neighbours; and became Servants by Turns, fometimes to the Kings of Egypt, fometimes to the Kings of Affyria and Babylon; till after many and great Distresses they were carried into Captivity, the People of Ifrael into Affyria, and Judah into Babylon .-

During this Period we find that God had not utterly for saken his People, but oftentimes gave them very signal Deliverances. But it is to be observed, that these Deliverances were not effected by their great Forces, but by the Interposition of God, when their

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Condition was such that they lost all Hope in their own Strength, and were willing to rely on God. Thus was Hezekiah delivered at a Time when he was so weak, that the Affyrians insolently offered him two thousand Horses, if he on his Part were able to set Riders upon them, 2 Kings xviii, 23. The Case will generally be found the same in other Instances:

By this short Account it appears that David was the last of the Rulers over Ifrael who observed the Law against multiplying Horses; and he was the last also who can be pretended to have been a Deliverer of the People. This Truth was feen by the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who when he reckons up the antient Worthies of his Country who trusted in God, and "by " Faith subdued Kingdoms, who out of "Weakness were made strong, and waxed " valiant in Fight, and turned to Flight the " Armies of the Aliens," shuts up his Catalogue with David, as being the last to whom these Characters could be applied, and after whom there arose none like to him to fave the People of Ifrael.

But it may be asked, perhaps, Were the Kings of Judah and Israel punished for having Chariots and Horses in their Armies?

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Does not the Scripture charge them with Idolatry, and many other Crimes, which brought on their Ruin? No doubt there were many other Crimes, and of a deeper dye, for which these Kings and their People were punished; but the true Question is, Was it a Crime at all to multiply Horses and Chariots?

The shortest Answer to this Question will be, to examine what Account their own Prophets have given of the Causes of their Ruin.

Isaiah lived in the Reign of four Kings of Judah, and prophesied of the Captivity. In his second Chapter, he thus recounts the Sins of his People: "They be replenished

" from the East, and are Soothsayers, like

" the Philistines, and they please themselves in the Children of Strangers; their Land

" also is full of Silver and Gold, neither is

" there any End of their Treasures: Their

Land also is full of Horses, neither is there

" any End of their Chariots."

So again, Chap. xxxi. " Wo to them that

" go down to Egypt for Help, and stay on

" Horses, and trust in Chariots, because

" they are many; and in Horsemen, because

" they are very ftrong: but they look not

unto the Holy One of Israel, neither feek

et the Lord."

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The Prophet Hosea lived under the same Kings that Isaiab did, and foresaw the Miseries coming upon his Country; he exhorts the People to Repentance, and has put a short Form of Confession into their Mouths; the two great Articles of it are these—" We will not ride upon Horses, neither will we fay any more to the Work of our Hands,

"Ye are our Gods." Chap. xiv. 3.

Consider now what is the Guilt of having a Country sull of Horses: Moral Evil surely there is none in it; and to charge all Princes with Iniquity who have a Strength of Horses in their Armies, and to transfer to them the Crime charged on this Account on the Kings of Judah and Israel, would be intolerable Abuse of the Phrase and Language of Scripture. But the Kings of Israel were exalted to the Throne on Condition that they should renounce the Assistance of Horses and Horsemen, and depend on God for Success in the Day of Battle.

Having seen then what the Law, and the Prophets, and the Experience of many Ages had taught the Jews to think of their Princes and their martial Preparations; let us look back to the Prophecy relating to the Messias, Zech. ix. 9. The Words are these; "Re"joice greatly, O Daughter of Zion; shout,
C c 2 "O Daugh-

"O Daughter of Jerusalem: Behold thy

" King cometh unto thee: He is just, and

" having Salvation, lowly, and riding upon

" an Ass, and upon a Colt, the Fole of an

" Afs.

" And I will cut off the Chariot from Ephraim, and the Horse from Jerusalem."

You see here that the King foretold was to save the People. Consider then what sort of King was to be expected: Is it possible to imagine that God would send a King to save them, who should be like the Kings who had undone them? Is it not more reasonable to imagine he should resemble those who had indeed been Deliverers of their Country? Kings who seared God, and therefore seared no Enemy; who, tho mounted on Asses, and Colts, the Foles of Asses, were able to put to slight the Thousands and ten Thousands of Chariots and Horses that came against them?

The King foretold by the Prophet was moreover to be just, meek, and lowly; but how could he have deserved this Character, had he appeared in the Pomp and Pride of War, surrounded with Horses and Chariots, in direct Opposition to the Law of God? Or, as he was to bring Salvation to the People, could he make use of those Means which

God

God never had prospered, and which he had fufficiently declared he never would?

You fee then how effential it was to the Character of a King of Israel, who was to be just, and lowly, and to bring Salvation with him, that he should come riding on an Ass, and a Colt, the Fole of an Ass. But if any Doubt can yet remain, let the Prophet himfelf explain it, who, immediately after his, Description of the promised King, adds, " And I will cut off the Chariot from Ephra-" im, and the Horse from Jerusalem;" plainly shewing, that the Character given of the Messias, that he should ride on an Ass, was in Opposition to the Pride of their warlike, Kings, who by their great Strength in Chariots and Horses had ruined themselves and their People.

To the same Purpose speaks the Prophet Hofea: I will have Mercy upon the House of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God, and will not fave them by Bow, nor by Sword, nor by Battle, by Horses, nor by Horsemen, i. 7. Thus also the Prophet Micab promised Deliverance to the Remnant of Jacob, and then adds, And it shall come to pass in that Day, faith the Lord, that I will cut off thy Horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy Chariots; and I will cut off the

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the Cities of thy Land, and throw down all the strong Holds, ver. 10, 11. Some Commentators have laboured to reconcile these Things, imagining, that there is a great Contradiction, in promising to save the People, and at the same time to cut off their Forces, and throw down their strong Holds: But the true Sense is, that the Salvation should be so perfect and compleat, that they should want neither these Forces nor their strong Holds, for God would be to them instead of Armies and fortissed Towns.

These Passages mutually support and enlighten each other, and shew undeniably what the Prophet had in view when he foretold that the Messias should ride on an Ass.

And what is there in all this to make Sport for Unbelievers? Has it appeared to be a mere trifling Circumstance in the Character of a King of Israel, whether he had Chariots and Horses of War or no? Or was it any Reproach to Christ to ride into Jerusalem on the Fole of an Ass, when David, the greatest of his Ancestors, and Solomon the wisest, as long as he was wise, rode in the same manner? Can the Jews object to this Circumstance, and yet talk of the Glories of David, and the Magnisicence of Solomon, who in the midst of all their Glory and Magnisicence

cence did the very same thing? Or can they stumble at this Character of the Messias, without forgetting by what Princes their Ancestors were saved, and by what undone?

From this general Account of the Affairs of the Kings of Israel, and the particular Circumstances they were under in regard to their own Law, there arise some Reflections which may be properly here mentioned. As first: The Law given to the Kings of Ifrael, confidered together with the History of that Nation, forms a very strong Presumption for the divine Original of the Law of Moses. For supposing Moses to be a mere human Legislator, like Solon or Locurgus, what could tempt him to forbid the Princes of his Country the Use of Horses and Chariots for their Defence? Should fuch a Law be proposed for France or Germany at this Day, what would the World think of it? Or suppoling this Law to be his own Contrivance, how comes it to pass that the Event and Success of Things thro' many Ages does fo exactly correspond to the Law? That the Princes prospered, and extended their Dominion over great Countries, when they had neither Chariots nor Horses; and were ruined and undone whn they were firong in these Forces? Can it be supposed that the

the History of many Ages, and which relates the Affairs not only of the Princes of Israel, but of other contemporary Kings, is all forged, and merely to shew an Agreement between the History and this particular Law? Or how shall we account for the Conduct of the Prophets, who saw the People ruined, and instead of reproaching them with Cowardice, and a Neglect of their necessary Defence, Things which usually usher in such Missortunes, reproach them with having been too strong, too powerful in Horses and Horsemen?

These Appearances can never be accounted for by any human Contrivance, and they plainly shew that the Hand of God was in this Thing from the beginning to the end.

adly, We may from hence collect the Nature of David's Crime in numbering the People of Ifrael. Had he acted in the true Spirit of a King of Ifrael, he would have been less sollicitous about the Number of his Forces, and would have trusted God with the Work which God had undertaken, and which he had constantly, and in David's Case in a very particular manner, discharged with Fidelity. Read the Promise in the Law—— "When thou goest to battle against thine Enemies, and thou seest

Horses and Chariots, and a People more than thou, be not assaid of them, for the Lord thy God is with thee." And confider, what but Distrust in God could tempt David to number his Forces? Happy had it been for him and the People had he then reslected, that God taketh no Pleasure in the Strength of an Horse, neither delighteth be in any Man's Legs. He ought to have remembered what his own Experience had taught him, that God wanted not the Assistance of Horse or Foot to execute the

Defigns of his Providence.

adly, It may be a Doubt, whether King Johab was not guilty of the same Fault in his warlike Preparations against the King of Egypt. Josiah has so good a Character in Scripture, that both Jews and Christians have been at a loss to account for the unfortunate End he came to, being slain in Battle against the King of Egypt. The learned Dr. Prideaux has justified this Conduct in opposing the Passage of the King of Egypt, because it was a Service due to the King of Assyria, to whom Josiah was a Vassal. Be it so; yet his Duty to the King of Assyria could not dissolve his Dependance on an higher Master: He went to war as Vastal of the King of Assyria, but did he alk

alk Counsel of God as King of Judah? Or was he attended to the War with fuch Forces only as the King of Judah might lawfully use? That he had Chariots and Horsemen, appears plainly from the Account of his Death, 2 Chron. xxxv. 24. for he was wounded in one Chariot, removed into another to be carried off, and 'tis very probable that there were Chariots and Horsemen many in his Army, since there appears no Scruple in him upon this Head. That this was the true, or the only Caufe of his Misfortune, I dare not affirm; for I have no express Authority to support me in affirming it: but this I fee, that he was found in the Day of Battle, not with the Equipage of a King of Judah, but furrounded with Forces, which the Law of his God had forbid him to trust to, and which had often proved a Strength fatal to his Ancestors.

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